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ESSAYS ON ADDISON

BY

MACAULAY AND THACKERAY

WITH

TWELVE ESSAYS BY ADDISON

EDITED BY

G. E. HADOW

TUTOR IN ENGLISH LITERATURE, LADY MARGARET HALL, OXFORD

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## INTRODUCTION

‘A MAN may be known by his friends,’ says the old proverb, and the saying holds true if we substitute for ‘friends’, ‘favourite authors.’ Fortunately for us few critics succeed in being impartial, and criticism has therefore the double interest of showing us what one great man thinks of another, and at the same time of giving us considerable insight into the character of the critic.

In the critical work of Macaulay and of Thackeray this unconscious self-revelation is peculiarly evident. In method, in attitude of mind, in sympathy, they differed widely from each other; and the difference is one, not only of manner, but of personality. M. Taine, in speaking of Macaulay’s *History*, has said that he always writes like a journalist, always knows how to make what he has to say interesting to the general public. ‘He employs every means of keeping up attention . . . He never forgets the actual. If he mentions a regiment, he points out in a few lines the splendid deeds which it has done since its formation up to our own day . . . He relates the reception of Schomberg in the House: who is interested in Schomberg? Forthwith he adds that Wellington, a hundred years later, was received under like circumstances, with a ceremony copied from the first.’ And the statement is equally true of his critical essays. He cannot speak of the changes in government brought about by the revolution of 1688 and their effect upon Addison’s career without at once drawing a parallel between events then and in 1830; he cannot discuss the state of parties in 1704 without remarking on their close analogy to the state of parties in 1826. Whatever



Macaulay may profess to be writing his work is in reality almost invariably historical. He never sees one age apart from another, and he never sees an individual apart from his age. He calls his essay the *Life and Writings of Addison*, but the *Life and Times of Addison* would be a truer title. It is not that we do not gain a clear and just impression of both the man and his work, but they are treated in such close relation to the political history of the day, that in the end we are left with a vivid impression of the early eighteenth century as a whole, and are inclined to think of Addison's life and writings as two important details among many others of equal interest, rather than as the main subject of the essay.

Nothing could be more different from this than the critical method of Thackeray. If Macaulay is always the historian, Thackeray is no less truly always the novelist. He draws a few rapid strokes, and a living, breathing man stands before us. We may agree or disagree with his view of this or that character, but once read it is impossible to forget it. We can no more think of Congreve apart from Thackeray's portrait of him—'with red-heeled shoes deliciously turned out, passing a fair, jewelled hand through his dishevelled periwig'—than having once read Carlyle's *French Revolution* we can think of Robespierre except as 'the sea-green incorruptible'. And with this power of vivid characterization Thackeray combines a gift of brilliant epigram. Macaulay's sonorous roll of eloquence bears us along on its tide, and almost overpowers us with its dignity and learning. We realize that we are reading the work of a man who read widely and who never forgot anything that he read. His pages are enriched by quotations from the classics, by illustrations from the most devious byways of English literature; he knows the works of Mr. Hoole, and the 'playful elegiacs' of Vincent Bourne; he is equally at home in criticizing the poets of France,



Germany, or Italy, or in discussing political situations in ancient Rome or modern England. Thackeray has none of this weight of learning, none of Macaulay's stateliness of diction, but his wit plays with the quickness of a rapier-thrust, and many of his sentences remain in the reader's mind as a permanent possession. His summary of eighteenth-century comedy—'the dialogue of a witty bargeman and a brilliant fishwoman exchanging compliments at Billingsgate'—remains the best criticism that we have of the Restoration drama. At times the simplicity of his style gives his words a force and directness which touch us more deeply than Macaulay's rhetoric. There is no more perfect phrase in our language than that in which he describes the great Evening Hymn :

| 'It seems to me those verses shine like the stars.'

Eminently characteristic too, is the attitude of the two men towards Addison himself. Macaulay has left us a magnificent panegyric, inspired by genuine feeling : 'To Addison we are bound by a sentiment as much like affection as any sentiment can be which is inspired by one who has been sleeping a hundred and twenty years in Westminster Abbey,' he writes, and the affection of which he speaks is evident throughout the essay. He defends his conduct towards Steele ; he points out the generosity which made his only answer to Pope's calumnies 'a warm encomium on the translation of the *Iliad*' ; he bids us admire the cheerful serenity with which he met reverses of fortune that might well have soured a lesser man. Thackeray reveres Addison, but he does not really love him ; his tenderness is reserved for poor improvident reckless 'Dick Steele', whose follies and excesses disgust Macaulay. Macaulay is untouched by the simplicity of Steele, and cannot believe that he would be known to-day but for his connexion with Addison. But simplicity and genuineness are the qualities which appeal to Thackeray above all others.

The influence of 'manly, English Harry Fielding' is plainly to be traced in his own work, and he has all Fielding's affection for an honest scapegrace. Steele's early papers 'may be compared to Addison's own', he declares, 'and are to be read, by a male reader at least, with quite an equal pleasure.' He can never quite forgive the self-consciousness of Addison's virtue, nor believe that it was ever really put to the proof. He accepts Pope's version of the quarrel between them and can believe that 'the parson in a tye-wig' was jealous of a brilliant rival.<sup>1</sup> 'His great figure looks out on us from the past . . . pale, calm, and beautiful,' he writes, but while he pays all honour to the beauty and purity of that spotless character, while he sees in his face the light of 'a glory of thanks and prayer', he can find in him none of those little human weaknesses which endear Steele to his heart.

Macaulay has something of eighteenth-century calmness and restraint. He is not yet emancipated from an age when criticism was above all things judicial. Thackeray, warm-hearted, vehement, impulsive (under all his parade of cynicism), is essentially the product of an age of emotion. He makes no profession of being unbiased. He hates and loves, and while we read we hate and love with him; it is only when we lay down the book that we realize that Swift was something more than 'a guilty, lonely wretch shuddering over the grave of his victim', and that Addison was not only admirable but lovable.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Montague's excellent edition of Macaulay's works, which all annotators of Macaulay must find invaluable.

G. E. H.

<sup>1</sup> See lecture on Prior, Gay, and Pope in *English Humourists*.

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# THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ADDISON

BY LORD MACAULAY

SOME reviewers are of opinion that a lady who dares to publish a book renounces by that act the franchises appertaining to her sex, and can claim no exemption from the utmost rigour of critical procedure. From that opinion we dissent. We admit, indeed, that in a country which boasts of many female writers, eminently qualified by their talents and acquirements to influence the public mind, it would be of most pernicious consequence that inaccurate history or unsound philosophy should be suffered to pass uncensured, merely because the offender chanced to be a lady. But we conceive that, on such occasions, a critic would do well to imitate the courteous Knight who found himself compelled by duty to keep the lists against Bradamante<sup>1</sup>. He, we are told, defended successfully the cause of which he was the champion ; but, before the fight began, exchanged Balisarda for a less deadly sword, of which he carefully blunted the point and edge.<sup>2</sup>

Nor are the immunities of sex the only immunities which Miss Aikin may rightfully plead. Several of her works, and especially the very pleasing *Memoirs of the Reign of James the First*, have fully entitled her to the privileges enjoyed by good writers. One of those privileges we hold to be this, that such writers, when, either from the unlucky choice of a subject, or from the indolence too often produced by success, they happen to fail, shall not be sub-

<sup>1</sup> [One of the chief characters in *Orlando Furioso*. Sister of Rinaldo. Known as the Virgin Knight.]

<sup>2</sup> *Orlando Furioso*, xlv. 68.



jected to the severe discipline which it is sometimes necessary to inflict upon dunces and impostors, but shall merely be reminded by a gentle touch, like that with which the Laputan flapper<sup>1</sup> roused his dreaming lord, that it is high time to wake.

Our readers will probably infer from what we have said that Miss Aikin's book has disappointed us. The truth is, that she is not well acquainted with her subject. No person who is not familiar with the political and literary history of England during the reigns of William the Third, of Anne, and of George the First, can possibly write a good life of Addison. Now, we mean no reproach to Miss Aikin, and many will think that we pay her a compliment, when we say that her studies have taken a different direction. She is better acquainted with Shakespeare and Raleigh, than with Congreve<sup>2</sup> and Prior<sup>3</sup>; and is far more at home among the ruffs and peaked beards of Theobald's<sup>4</sup> than among the Steenkirks<sup>5</sup> and flowing periwigs which surrounded Queen Anne's tea table at Hampton. She seems to have written about the Elizabethan age, because she had read much about it; she seems, on the other hand, to have read a little about the age of Addison, because she had determined to write about it. The consequence is that she has had to describe men and things without having either a correct or a vivid idea of them, and that she has often fallen into errors of a very serious kind. The reputation which Miss Aikin has justly earned stands so high, and the charm of Addison's letters is so great, that a second edition of this work may probably be required. If so, we hope that every paragraph will be revised, and that every date and fact about which there can be the smallest doubt will be carefully verified.

To Addison himself we are bound by a sentiment as much like affection as any sentiment can be, which is

<sup>1</sup> [Chap. ii of the Voyage to Laputa; *Gulliver's Travels*, part iii.]

<sup>2</sup> [1670-1729. The most famous of the Restoration comedy writers.]

<sup>3</sup> [1664-1721. Chiefly known as a writer of lyrics.]

<sup>4</sup> [In Hertfordshire: the favourite country residence of James I.]

<sup>5</sup> [A fashionable cravat introduced from Paris and named after the battle of Steenkirk (1692). It was tied very loosely, in supposed imitation of the French generals who rushed into battle without waiting to arrange their dress.]



inspired by one who has been sleeping a hundred and twenty years in Westminster Abbey. We trust, however, that this feeling will not betray us into that abject idolatry which we have often had occasion to reprehend in others, and which seldom fails to make both the idolater and the idol ridiculous. A man of genius and virtue is but a man. All his powers cannot be equally developed; nor can we expect from him perfect self-knowledge. We need not, therefore, hesitate to admit that Addison has left us some compositions which do not rise above mediocrity, some heroic poems hardly equal to Parnell's<sup>1</sup>, some criticism as superficial as Dr. Blair's<sup>2</sup>, and a tragedy not very much better than Dr. Johnson's<sup>3</sup>. It is praise enough to say of a writer that, in a high department of literature, in which many eminent writers have distinguished themselves, he has had no equal; and this may with strict justice be said of Addison.

As a man, he may not have deserved the adoration which he received from those who, bewitched by his fascinating society, and indebted for all the comforts of life to his generous and delicate friendship, worshipped him nightly, in his favourite temple at Button's<sup>4</sup>. But, after full inquiry and impartial reflection, we have long been convinced that he deserved as much love and esteem as can be justly claimed by any of our infirm and erring race. Some blemishes may undoubtedly be detected in his character; but the more carefully it is examined, the more will it appear, to use the phrase of the old anatomists, sound in the noble parts, free from all taint of perfidy, of cowardice, of cruelty, of ingratitude, of envy. Men may easily be named, in whom some particular good disposition has been more conspicuous than in Addison. But the just harmony of qualities, the exact temper between the stern and the humane virtues, the habitual observance of every law, not only of moral rectitude, but of moral grace

<sup>1</sup> [1679-1718. He translated the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*.]

<sup>2</sup> [1718-1800. Author of *Lectures on Rhetoric*, and Professor of Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres at the University of Edinburgh, 1762.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Irene*, 1749.]

<sup>4</sup> [A coffee-house established by the Countess of Warwick's servant, Daniel Button, in 1712, and frequented by Addison and his friends.]



and dignity, distinguish him from all men who have been tried by equally strong temptations, and about whose conduct we possess equally full information.

His father was the Reverend Lancelot Addison, who, though eclipsed by his more celebrated son, made some figure in the world, and occupies with credit two folio pages in the *Biographia Britannica*. Lancelot was sent up, as a poor scholar, from Westmoreland to Queen's College, Oxford, in the time of the Commonwealth, made some progress in learning, became, like most of his fellow students, a violent Royalist, lampooned the heads of the University, and was forced to ask pardon on his bended knees. When he had left college, he earned a humble subsistence by reading the liturgy of the fallen Church to the families of those sturdy squires whose manor houses were scattered over the Wild of Sussex. After the Restoration, his loyalty was rewarded with the post of chaplain to the garrison of Dunkirk<sup>1</sup>. When Dunkirk was sold to France, he lost his employment. But Tangier had been ceded by Portugal to England as part of the marriage portion of the Infanta Catharine<sup>2</sup>; and to Tangier Lancelot Addison was sent. A more miserable situation can hardly be conceived. It was difficult to say whether the unfortunate settlers were more tormented by the heats or by the rains, by the soldiers within the wall or by the Moors without it. One advantage the chaplain had. He enjoyed an excellent opportunity of studying the history and manners of Jews and Mahometans; and of this opportunity he appears to have made excellent use. On his return to England, after some years of banishment, he published an interesting volume on the *Polity and Religion of Barbary*, and another on the *Hebrew Customs and the State of Rabbinical Learning*. He rose to eminence in his profession, and became one of the royal chaplains, a Doctor of Divinity, Archdeacon of Salisbury, and Dean of Lichfield. It is said that he would have been made a bishop after the Revolution, if he had not given

<sup>1</sup> [Ceded to the English in 1658, and held by them until 1661, when Charles II sold it back to France.]

<sup>2</sup> [Catharine of Braganza, wife of Charles II.]



offence to the government by strenuously opposing, in the Convocation of 1689, the liberal policy of William and Tillotson<sup>1</sup>.

In 1672, not long after Dr. Addison's return from Tangier, his son Joseph was born. Of Joseph's childhood we know little. He learned his rudiments at schools in his father's neighbourhood, and was then sent to the Charter House. The anecdotes which are popularly related about his boyish tricks do not harmonize very well with what we know of his riper years. There remains a tradition that he was the ringleader in a barring out, and another tradition that he ran away from school and hid himself in a wood, where he fed on berries and slept in a hollow tree, till after a long search he was discovered and brought home. If these stories be true, it would be curious to know by what moral discipline so mutinous and enterprising a lad was transformed into the gentlest and most modest of men.)

We have abundant proof that, whatever Joseph's pranks may have been, he pursued his studies vigorously and successfully. At fifteen he was not only fit for the university, but carried thither a classical taste and a stock of learning which would have done honour to a Master of Arts. He was entered at Queen's College, Oxford; but he had not been many months there, when some of his Latin verses fell by accident into the hands of Dr. Lancaster, Dean of Magdalene College. The young scholar's diction and versification were already such as veteran professors might envy. Dr. Lancaster was desirous to serve a boy of such promise; nor was an opportunity long wanting. The Revolution had just taken place; and nowhere had it been hailed with more delight than at Magdalene College. That great and opulent corporation had been treated by James, and by his Chancellor<sup>2</sup>, with an insolence and injustice which, even in such a Prince and in such a Minister, may justly excite amazement, and which had done more than

<sup>1</sup> [Bishop Tillotson, a famous preacher and divine, supported the Toleration Act of 1689 by which William III granted certain concessions to the Nonconformists. Tillotson was made Archbishop of Canterbury in the following year.]

<sup>2</sup> [Judge Jeffreys.]



even the prosecution of the Bishops to alienate the Church of England from the throne. A president, duly elected, had been violently expelled from his dwelling : a Papist had been set over the society by a royal mandate : the Fellows who, in conformity with their oaths, had refused to submit to this usurper, had been driven forth from their quiet cloisters and gardens, to die of want or to live on charity. But the day of redress and retribution speedily came. The intruders were ejected : the venerable House was again inhabited by its old inmates : learning flourished under the rule of the wise and virtuous Hough ; and with learning was united a mild and liberal spirit too often wanting in the princely colleges of Oxford. In consequence of the troubles through which the society had passed, there had been no valid election of new members during the year 1688. In 1689, therefore, there was twice the ordinary number of vacancies ; and thus Dr. Lancaster found it easy to procure for his young friend admittance to the advantages of a foundation then generally esteemed the wealthiest in Europe.

At Magdalene Addison resided during ten years. He was, at first, one of those scholars who are called Demies, but was subsequently elected a Fellow. His college is still proud of his name : his portrait still hangs in the hall ; and strangers are still told that his favourite walk was under the elms which fringe the meadow on the banks of the Cherwell. It is said, and is highly probable, that he was distinguished among his fellow students by the delicacy of his feelings, by the shyness of his manners, and by the assiduity with which he often prolonged his studies far into the night. It is certain that his reputation for ability and learning stood high. Many years later, the ancient doctors of Magdalene continued to talk in their common room of his boyish compositions, and expressed their sorrow that no copy of exercises so remarkable had been preserved.

It is proper, however, to remark that Miss Aikin has committed the error, very pardonable in a lady, of overrating Addison's classical attainments. In one department of learning, indeed, his proficiency was such as it is hardly possible to overrate. His knowledge of the Latin poets,



from Lucretius<sup>1</sup> and Catullus<sup>2</sup> down to Claudian<sup>3</sup> and Prudentius<sup>4</sup>, was singularly exact and profound. He understood them thoroughly, entered into their spirit, and had the finest and most discriminating perception of all their peculiarities of style and melody; nay, he copied their manner with admirable skill, and surpassed, we think, all their British imitators who had preceded him, Buchanan<sup>5</sup> and Milton alone excepted. This is high praise; and beyond this we cannot with justice go. It is clear that Addison's serious attention during his residence at the university was almost entirely concentrated on Latin poetry, and that, if he did not wholly neglect other provinces of ancient literature, he vouchsafed to them only a cursory glance. He does not appear to have attained more than an ordinary acquaintance with the political and modern writers of Rome; nor was his own Latin prose by any means equal to his Latin verse. His knowledge of Greek, though doubtless such as was, in his time, thought respectable at Oxford, was evidently less than that which many lads now carry away every year from Eton and Rugby. A minute examination of his works, if we had time to make such an examination, would fully bear out these remarks. We will briefly advert to a few of the facts on which our judgement is grounded.

Great praise is due to the Notes which Addison appended to his version of the second and third books of the *Metamorphoses*<sup>6</sup>. Yet those notes, while they show him to have been, in his own domain, an accomplished scholar, show also how confined that domain was. They are rich in apposite references to Virgil, Statius<sup>7</sup>, and Claudian; but they contain not a single illustration drawn from the

<sup>1</sup> [B.C. 95 (?)–B.C. 55 (?). Author of a philosophical poem called *De Rerum Natura*.]

<sup>2</sup> [B.C. 87–B.C. 47 (?). Lyric poet of the time of Julius Caesar.]

<sup>3</sup> [One of the last of Roman poets: fourth century, A. D.]

<sup>4</sup> [The first Christian poet of any celebrity: fourth century, A. D. Translations of some of his hymns are used in our services at the present day.]

<sup>5</sup> [1506–1582. Historian and scholar, author of many Latin works including four tragedies.]

<sup>6</sup> [Ovid's chief work, a poem in fifteen books, relating all the famous legends concerning transformations of shape or nature.]

<sup>7</sup> [A poet of the first century, A. D. Much influenced by Virgil.]



Greek poets. Now, if, in the whole compass of Latin literature, there be a passage which stands in need of illustration drawn from the Greek poets, it is the story of Pentheus<sup>1</sup> in the third book of the *Metamorphoses*. Ovid was indebted for that story to Euripides<sup>2</sup> and Theocritus<sup>3</sup>, both of whom he has sometimes followed minutely. But neither to Euripides nor to Theocritus does Addison make the faintest allusion; and we, therefore, believe that we do not wrong him by supposing that he had little or no knowledge of their works.

His *Travels in Italy*, again, abound with classical quotations happily introduced; but scarcely one of those quotations is in prose. He draws more illustrations from Ausonius<sup>4</sup> and Manilius<sup>5</sup> than from Cicero<sup>6</sup>. Even his notions of the political and military affairs of the Romans seem to be derived from poets and poetasters. Spots made memorable by events which have changed the destinies of the world, and which have been worthily recorded by great historians, bring to his mind only scraps of some ancient versifier. In the gorge of the Apennines he naturally remembers the hardships which Hannibal's<sup>7</sup> army endured, and proceeds to cite, not the authentic narrative of Polybius<sup>8</sup>, not the picturesque narrative of Livy<sup>9</sup>, but the languid hexameters of Silius Italicus<sup>10</sup>. On

<sup>1</sup> [King of Thebes, who, having offended Bacchus, was torn to pieces by women who were celebrating the mysteries of the god. Euripides' tragedy, the *Bacchae*, is founded on this story.]

<sup>2</sup> [B.C. 480-B.C. 406.]

<sup>3</sup> [A Greek poet of Syracuse, the originator of pastoral poetry. He lived in the third century, B. C.]

<sup>4</sup> [A Latin poet of the fourth century, A.D.]

<sup>5</sup> [Author of a poem called *Astronomica*, in which much erudition is displayed. He wrote in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. The poem has never been popular.]

<sup>6</sup> [B.C. 106?-B.C. 43.]

<sup>7</sup> [During the Second Punic War, B.C. 218, when Hannibal was leading his army down through Italy.]

<sup>8</sup> [A famous historian, contemporary with Hannibal. He wrote in Greek.]

<sup>9</sup> [B.C. 59-A.D. 17; one of the most famous of Roman historians; born at Padua, on the river Po (see p. 21).]

<sup>10</sup> [Author of a dull poem on the Second Punic War. The materials for the poem are taken from Polybius and Livy.]

the banks of the Rubicon<sup>1</sup> he never thinks of Plutarch's<sup>2</sup> lively description, or of the stern conciseness of the *Commentaries*<sup>3</sup>, or of those letters to Atticus<sup>4</sup> which so forcibly express the alternations of hope and fear in a sensitive mind at a great crisis. His only authority for the events of the civil war is Lucan<sup>5</sup>.

All the best ancient works of art at Rome and Florence are Greek. Addison saw them, however, without recalling one single verse of Pindar<sup>6</sup>, of Callimachus<sup>7</sup>, or of the Attic dramatists; but they brought to his recollection innumerable passages of Horace<sup>8</sup>, Juvenal<sup>9</sup>, Statius<sup>10</sup>, and Ovid.

The same may be said of the *Treatise on Medals*. In that pleasing work we find about three hundred passages extracted with great judgement from the Roman poets; but we do not recollect a single passage taken from any Roman orator or historian; and we are confident that not a line is quoted from any Greek writer. No person, who had derived all his information on the subject of medals from Addison, would suspect that the Greek coins were in historical interest equal, and in beauty of execution far superior to those of Rome.

If it were necessary to find any further proof that Addison's classical knowledge was confined within narrow limits, that proof would be furnished by his *Essay on the Evidences of Christianity*. The Roman poets throw little or no light on the literary and historical questions which he is under the necessity of examining in that Essay. He is, therefore, left completely in the dark; and it is

<sup>1</sup> [Caesar declared war on the Republic by leading his army across the Rubicon, a small river which formed one of the northern boundaries of Italy proper.]

<sup>2</sup> [A famous Greek writer of the first century, A.D. His biography of Caesar (in North's translation) was used by Shakespeare.]

<sup>3</sup> [Caesar's own account of his wars.]

<sup>4</sup> [Cicero's letters to his friend Atticus.]

<sup>5</sup> [A Roman poet of the first century, A.D., who wrote an epic on the civil war.]

<sup>6</sup> [The greatest lyric poet of Greece.]

<sup>7</sup> [A Greek poet of Alexandria.]

<sup>8</sup> [B.C. 65-B.C. 8.]

<sup>9</sup> [A.D. 46-A.D. 130 ?]

<sup>10</sup> [B.C. 43-A.D. 17.]



melancholy to see how helplessly he gropes his way from blunder to blunder. He assigns, as grounds for his religious belief, stories as absurd as that of the Cock-Lane<sup>1</sup> ghost, and forgeries as rank as Ireland's<sup>2</sup> *Vortigern*, puts faith in the lie about the Thundering Legion<sup>3</sup>, is convinced that Tiberius moved the senate to admit Jesus among the gods<sup>4</sup>, and pronounces the letter of Agbarus King of Edessa<sup>5</sup> to be a record of great authority. Nor were these errors the effects of superstition; for to superstition Addison was by no means prone. The truth is that he was writing about what he did not understand.

Miss Aikin has discovered a letter, from which it appears that, while Addison resided at Oxford, he was one of several writers whom the booksellers engaged to make an English version of Herodotus<sup>6</sup>; and she infers that he must have been a good Greek scholar. We can allow very little weight to this argument, when we consider that his fellow labourers were to have been Boyle<sup>7</sup> and Blackmore<sup>8</sup>. Boyle is remembered chiefly as the nominal author of the worst book on Greek history and philology that ever was printed; and this book, bad as it is, Boyle was unable to produce without help. Of Blackmore's attainments in the ancient tongues, it may be sufficient to say that, in his prose, he has confounded an aphorism with an apoph-

<sup>1</sup> [A well-known ghost-story of the time of Dr. Johnson.]

<sup>2</sup> [Ireland was a notorious literary forger of the eighteenth century. His tragedy of *Vortigern* was accepted by Sheridan as Shakespeare's, and was acted at Drury Lane in 1795, when the audience received it with laughter.]

<sup>3</sup> [Marcus Aurelius, fighting against the Marcomanni, owed one of his victories to an opportune thunder-storm, which, according to Tertullian, was sent in answer to the prayer of some Christian soldiers in the Roman army.]

<sup>4</sup> [This story is given on the authority of Tertullian (one of the earliest of the Christian 'fathers' of the Western Church).]

<sup>5</sup> [Eusebius of Caesarea, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, I. xiv, quotes a letter from Agbarus, King of Edessa, in Mesopotamia, to Christ, and also the answer which Christ is supposed to have written in reply. Both letters are now acknowledged to be spurious.]

<sup>6</sup> [The Greek historian who wrote an account of the Persian War.]

<sup>7</sup> [Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery, whose dispute with Bentley concerning the *Epistles of Phalaris* led Swift to write the *Battle of the Books*.]

<sup>8</sup> [Sir Richard Blackmore, a voluminous writer in verse and prose.]



thegm<sup>1</sup>, and that when, in his verse, he treats of classical subjects, his habit is to regale his readers with four false quantities to a page.

It is probable that the classical acquirements of Addison were of as much service to him as if they had been more extensive. The world generally gives its admiration, not to the man who does what nobody else even attempts to do, but to the man who does best what multitudes do well. Bentley<sup>2</sup> was so immeasurably superior to all the other scholars of his time that few among them could discover his superiority. But the accomplishment in which Addison excelled his contemporaries was then, as it is now, highly valued and assiduously cultivated at all English seats of learning. Everybody who had been at a public school had written Latin verses; many had written such verses with tolerable success, and were quite able to appreciate, though by no means able to rival, the skill with which Addison imitated Virgil. His lines on the *Barometer* and the *Bowling Green* were applauded by hundreds, to whom the *Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris* was as unintelligible as the hieroglyphics on an obelisk.

Purity of style, and an easy flow of numbers, are common to all Addison's Latin poems. Our favourite piece is the *Battle of the Cranes and Pygmies*; for in that piece we discern a gleam of the fancy and humour which many years later enlivened thousands of breakfast tables. Swift boasted that he was never known to steal a hint; and he certainly owed as little to his predecessors as any modern writer. Yet we cannot help suspecting that he borrowed, perhaps unconsciously, one of the happiest touches in his *Voyage to Lilliput* from Addison's verses. Let our readers judge.

'The Emperor,' says Gulliver, 'is taller by about the breadth of my nail than any of his court, which alone is enough to strike an awe into the beholders.'

<sup>1</sup> [Aphorism literally means a definition, and apophthegm an utterance. But the two words are currently used in the same sense—that of a pithy maxim. See *Murray's Dictionary*, s.vv.]

<sup>2</sup> [Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, 1700-1742. The most learned classical scholar of his day.]



About thirty years before *Gulliver's Travels* appeared, Addison wrote these lines :

Jamque acies inter medias sese arduus infert  
Pygmeadum ductor, qui, majestate verendus,  
Incessuque gravis, reliquos supereminet omnes  
Mole gigantea, medianque exsurgit in ulnam.<sup>1</sup>

The Latin poems of Addison were greatly and justly admired both at Oxford and Cambridge, before his name had ever been heard by the wits who thronged the coffee-houses round Drury-Lane theatre. In his twenty-second year, he ventured to appear before the public as a writer of English verse. He addressed some complimentary lines to Dryden, who, after many triumphs and many reverses, had at length reached a secure and lonely eminence among the literary men of that age. Dryden appears to have been much gratified by the young scholar's praise ; and an interchange of civilities and good offices followed. Addison was probably introduced by Dryden to Congreve, and was certainly presented by Congreve to Charles Montague, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and leader of the Whig party in the House of Commons.

At this time Addison seemed inclined to devote himself to poetry. He published a translation of part of the fourth *Georgic*<sup>2</sup>, *Lines to King William*, and other performances of equal value, that is to say, of no value at all. But in those days, the public was in the habit of receiving with applause pieces which would now have little chance of obtaining the Newdigate<sup>3</sup> prize or the Seatonian<sup>4</sup> prize. And the reason is obvious. The heroic couplet was then the favourite measure. The art of arranging words in

<sup>1</sup> [Now between the ranks the leader of the Pygmies enters with head erect, who, dread in majesty and dignified in step, overtops all the rest with his gigantic stature and rises to the height of half an ell.]

<sup>2</sup> [Virgil's *Georgics* are four poems on agricultural life. The fourth is concerned with bees.]

<sup>3</sup> [Founded in 1806 by Sir Roger Newdigate, and awarded each year by the University of Oxford for the best English poem on a given subject.]

<sup>4</sup> [A prize similar to the Newdigate, founded at Cambridge by Thomas Seaton in 1741, and given each year for the best English poem on a sacred subject.]



that measure, so that the lines may flow smoothly, that the accents may fall correctly, that the rhymes may strike the ear strongly, and that there may be a pause at the end of every distich, is an art as mechanical as that of mending a kettle or shoeing a horse, and may be learned by any human being who has sense enough to learn anything. But, like other mechanical arts, it was gradually improved by means of many experiments and many failures. It was reserved for Pope to discover the trick, to make himself complete master of it, and to teach it to everybody else. From the time when his Pastorals appeared, heroic versification became matter of rule and compass; and, before long, all artists were on a level. Hundreds of dunces who never blundered on one happy thought or expression were able to write reams of couplets which, as far as euphony was concerned, could not be distinguished from those of Pope himself, and which very clever writers of the reign of Charles the Second, Rochester<sup>1</sup>, for example, or Marvel<sup>2</sup>, or Oldham<sup>3</sup>, would have contemplated with admiring despair.

Ben Jonson was a great man, Hoole<sup>4</sup> a very small man. But Hoole, coming after Pope, had learned how to manufacture decasyllable verses, and poured them forth by thousands and tens of thousands, all as well turned, as smooth, and as like each other as the blocks which have passed through Mr. Brunel's mill in the dockyard at Portsmouth. Ben's heroic couplets resemble blocks rudely hewn out by an unpractised hand, with a blunt hatchet. Take as a specimen his translation of a celebrated passage in the *Æneid*:

This child our parent earth, stirr'd up with spite  
Of all the gods, brought forth, and, as some write,

<sup>1</sup> [Charles II's witty favourite. Author of several lyrics, and of the well-known epitaph on Charles himself:

Here lies our sovereign lord the king  
Whose word no man relies on;  
Who never said a foolish thing,  
And never did a wise one.

<sup>2</sup> [A lyric poet of the seventeenth century.]

<sup>3</sup> [A satirist of the late seventeenth century.]

<sup>4</sup> [Noted in the eighteenth century for his translations of Tasso and Ariosto.]



She was last sister of that giant race  
 That sought to scale Jove's court, right swift of pace,  
 And swifter far of wing, a monster vast  
 And dreadful. Look, how many plumes are placed  
 On her huge corpse, so many waking eyes  
 Stick underneath, and, which may stranger rise  
 In the report, as many tongues she wears.

Compare with these jagged misshapen distichs the neat fabric which Hoole's machine produces in unlimited abundance. We take the first lines on which we open in his version of Tasso. They are neither better nor worse than the rest :

O thou, whoe'er thou art, whose steps are led,  
 By choice or fate, these lonely shores to tread,  
 No greater wonders east or west can boast  
 Than yon small island on the pleasing coast  
 If e'er thy sight would blissful scenes explore,  
 The current pass, and seek the further shore.

Ever since the time of Pope there has been a glut of lines of this sort ; and we are now as little disposed to admire a man for being able to write them, as for being able to write his name. But in the days of William the Third such versification was rare ; and a rhymers who had any skill in it passed for a great poet, just as in the dark ages a person who could write his name passed for a great clerk. Accordingly, Duke<sup>1</sup>, Stepney<sup>2</sup>, Granville<sup>3</sup>, Walsh<sup>4</sup>, and others whose only title to fame was that they said in tolerable metre what might have been as well said in prose, or what was not worth saying at all, were honoured with marks of distinction which ought to be reserved for genius.

<sup>1</sup> [Author of a satire against Titus Oates, and of several translations from the Latin, besides sermons and 'occasional pieces'.]

<sup>2</sup> [Best known as British envoy at several European courts in the reign of William III. Author of several bad translations from the classics.]

<sup>3</sup> [Verse-writer, dramatist, and translator. Dr. Johnson says of him, 'He had no ambition above the imitation of Waller, of whom he has copied the faults, and very little more.']

<sup>4</sup> [Critic and minor poet, chiefly noted on account of his friendship with Pope.]



With these Addison must have ranked, if he had not earned true and lasting glory by performances which very little resembled his juvenile poems.

Dryden was now busied with Virgil, and obtained from Addison a critical preface to the *Georgics*. In return for this service, and for other services of the same kind, the veteran poet, in the postscript to the translation of the *Æneid*, complimented his young friend with great liberality, and indeed with more liberality than sincerity. He affected to be afraid that his own performance would not sustain a comparison with the version of the fourth *Georgic*, by 'the most ingenious Mr. Addison of Oxford'. 'After his bees,' added Dryden, 'my latter swarm is scarcely worth the hiving.'

The time had now arrived when it was necessary for Addison to choose a calling. Everything seemed to point his course towards the clerical profession. His habits were regular, his opinions orthodox. His college had large ecclesiastical preferment in its gift, and boasts that it has given at least one bishop to almost every see in England. Dr. Lancelot Addison held an honourable place in the Church, and had set his heart on seeing his son a clergyman. It is clear, from some expressions in the young man's rhymes, that his intention was to take orders. But Charles Montague interfered. Montague had first brought himself into notice by verses, well timed and not contemptibly written, but never, we think, rising above mediocrity. Fortunately for himself and for his country, he early quitted poetry, in which he could never have attained a rank as high as that of Dorset<sup>1</sup> or Rochester, and turned his mind to official and parliamentary business. It is written that the ingenious person who undertook to instruct Rasselas<sup>2</sup>, prince of Abyssinia, in the art of flying, ascended an eminence, waved his wings, sprang into the air, and instantly dropped into the lake. But it is added that the wings, which were unable to support him through the sky, bore him up effectually as soon as he was in the water. This is no bad type of the fate of Charles Montague,

<sup>1</sup> [1637-1706. Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset; author of a few lyrical and satirical poems, and noted as a patron of literature.]

<sup>2</sup> [The hero of Dr. Johnson's novel of that name.]



and of men like him. When he attempted to soar into the regions of poetical invention, he altogether failed; but, as soon as he had descended from that ethereal elevation into a lower and grosser element, his talents instantly raised him above the mass. He became a distinguished financier, debater, courtier, and party leader. He still retained his fondness for the pursuits of his early days; but he showed that fondness not by wearying the public with his own feeble performances, but by discovering and encouraging literary excellence in others. A crowd of wits and poets, who would easily have vanquished him as a competitor, revered him as a judge and a patron. In his plans for the encouragement of learning, he was cordially supported by the ablest and most virtuous of his colleagues, the Lord Chancellor Somers. Though both these great statesmen had a sincere love of letters, it was not solely from a love of letters that they were desirous to enlist youths of high intellectual qualifications in the public service. The Revolution had altered the whole system of government. Before that event the press had been controlled by censors, and the Parliament had sat only two months in eight years. Now the press was free, and had begun to exercise unprecedented influence on the public mind. Parliament met annually and sat long. The chief power in the State had passed to the House of Commons. At such a conjuncture, it was natural that literary and oratorical talents should rise in value. There was danger that a Government which neglected such talents might be subverted by them. It was, therefore, a profound and enlightened policy which led Montague and Somers to attach such talents to the Whig party, by the strongest ties both of interest and of gratitude.

It is remarkable that in a neighbouring country, we have recently seen similar effects follow from similar causes. The revolution of July 1830 established representative government in France. The men of letters instantly rose to the highest importance in the state. At the present moment most of the persons whom we see at the head both of the Administration and of the Opposition have been Professors, Historians, Journalists, Poets. The influence of the literary class in England, during the genera-



tion which followed the Revolution, was great, but by no means so great as it has lately been in France. For, in England, the aristocracy of intellect had to contend with a powerful and deeply rooted aristocracy of a very different kind. France had no Somersets<sup>1</sup> and Shrewsburies<sup>2</sup> to keep down her Addisons and Priors.

It was in the year 1699, when Addison had just completed his twenty-seventh year, that the course of his life was finally determined. Both the great chiefs of the Ministry were kindly disposed towards him. In political opinions he already was what he continued to be through life, a firm, though a moderate Whig. He had addressed the most polished and vigorous of his early English lines to Somers, and had dedicated to Montague a Latin poem, truly Virgilian, both in style and rhythm, on the peace of Ryswick<sup>3</sup>. The wish of the young poet's great friends was, it should seem, to employ him in the service of the Crown abroad. But an intimate knowledge of the French language was a qualification indispensable to a diplomatist; and this qualification Addison had not acquired. It was, therefore, thought desirable that he should pass some time on the Continent in preparing himself for official employment. His own means were not such as would enable him to travel: but a pension of three hundred pounds a year was procured for him by the interest of the Lord Chancellor. It seems to have been apprehended that some difficulty might be started by the rulers of Magdalene College. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer wrote in the strongest terms to Hough. The State—such was the purport of Montague's letter—could not, at that time, spare to the Church such a man as Addison. Too many high civil posts were already occupied by adventurers, who, destitute of every liberal art and sentiment, at once pillaged and disgraced the country which they pretended to serve. It had become necessary to recruit for the public service from

<sup>1</sup> [A noted Whig who assisted Shrewsbury, Somers, and Argyll to establish the Hanoverian succession.]

<sup>2</sup> [Leader of the Whig party for some time. He corresponded with the Stuarts, but eventually helped to place George I on the throne.]

<sup>3</sup> [Which ended the war between France and the Grand Alliance, 1697 (cf. p. 94).]



a very different class, from that class of which Addison was the representative. The close of the Minister's letter was remarkable. 'I am called,' he said, 'an enemy of the Church. But I will never do it any other injury than keeping Mr. Addison out of it.'

This interference was successful; and, in the summer of 1699, Addison, made a rich man by his pension, and still retaining his fellowship, quitted his beloved Oxford, and set out on his travels. He crossed from Dover to Calais, proceeded to Paris, and was received there with great kindness and politeness by a kinsman of his friend Montague, Charles Earl of Manchester, who had just been appointed Ambassador to the Court of France. The Countess, a Whig and a toast, was probably as gracious as her lord; for Addison long retained an agreeable recollection of the impression which she at this time made on him, and, in some lively lines written on the glasses of the Kit Cat Club<sup>1</sup>, described the envy which her cheeks, glowing with the genuine bloom of England, had excited among the painted beauties of Versailles.

Lewis the Fourteenth was at this time expiating the vices of his youth by a devotion which had no root in reason, and bore no fruit of charity. The servile literature of France had changed its character to suit the changed character of the prince. No book appeared that had not an air of sanctity. Racine<sup>2</sup>, who was just dead, had passed the close of his life in writing sacred dramas; and Dacier<sup>3</sup> was seeking for the Athanasian mysteries in Plato. Addison described this state of things in a short but lively and graceful letter to Montague. Another letter, written about the same time to the Lord Chancellor, conveyed the strongest assurances of gratitude and attachment. 'The only return I can make to your Lordship,' said Addison, 'will be to apply myself entirely to my business.' With

<sup>1</sup> [A famous association of Whigs, founded in the reign of James II. Defoe says that it was called after Christopher Catt who kept the pastry-cook's shop at which the club originally met. *The Spectator* (No. 9) derives the name from a particular kind of pie, known as 'kit-cat.']

<sup>2</sup> [1639-1699. His last two plays were *Esther* (1689) and *Athalie* (1691).]

<sup>3</sup> [1651-1722. A famous French scholar and critic.]



this view he quitted Paris and repaired to Blois, a place where it was supposed that the French language was spoken in its highest purity, and where not a single Englishman could be found. Here he passed some months pleasantly and profitably. Of his way of life at Blois, one of his associates, an Abbé named Philippeaux, gave an account to Joseph Spence<sup>1</sup>. If this account is to be trusted, Addison studied much, mused much, talked little, had fits of absence, and either had no love affairs, or was too discreet to confide them to the Abbé. A man who, even when surrounded by fellow countrymen and fellow students, had always been remarkably shy and silent, was not likely to be loquacious in a foreign tongue, and among foreign companions. But it is clear from Addison's letters, some of which were long after published in the *Guardian*, that, while he appeared to be absorbed in his own meditations, he was really observing French society with that keen and sly, yet not ill-natured side glance, which was peculiarly his own.

From Blois he returned to Paris; and, having now mastered the French language, found great pleasure in the society of French philosophers and poets. He gave an account, in a letter to Bishop Hough, of two highly interesting conversations, one with Malbranche<sup>2</sup>, the other with Boileau<sup>3</sup>. Malbranche expressed great partiality for the English, and extolled the genius of Newton<sup>4</sup>, but shook his head when Hobbes<sup>5</sup> was mentioned, and was indeed so unjust as to call the author of the *Leviathan* a poor silly creature. Addison's modesty restrained him from fully relating, in his letter, the circumstances of his introduction to Boileau. Boileau, having survived the friends and rivals of his youth, old, deaf, and melancholy, lived in retirement, seldom went either to Court or to the Academy, and was almost inaccessible to strangers. Of the English

<sup>1</sup> [An eighteenth-century critic, the friend of Pope. He left a collection of literary anecdotes concerning Pope and Addison and their circle which was published after his death.]

<sup>2</sup> [An eminent French philosopher, much influenced by Descartes.]

<sup>3</sup> [1636-1711. The most famous literary critic of the day.]

<sup>4</sup> [Sir Isaac Newton, the mathematician.]

<sup>5</sup> [An English philosopher of the seventeenth century. His chief work, *Leviathan*, is a defence of absolute monarchy.]



and of English literature he knew nothing. He had hardly heard the name of Dryden. Some of our countrymen, in the warmth of their patriotism, have asserted that this ignorance must have been affected. We own that we see no ground for such a supposition. English literature was to the French of the age of Lewis the Fourteenth what German literature was to our own grandfathers. Very few, we suspect, of the accomplished men who, sixty or seventy years ago, used to dine in Leicester Square with Sir Joshua<sup>1</sup>, or at Streatham with Mrs. Thrale<sup>2</sup>, had the slightest notion that Wieland<sup>3</sup> was one of the first wits and poets, and Lessing<sup>4</sup>, beyond all dispute, the first critic in Europe. Boileau knew just as little about the *Paradise Lost*, and about *Absalom and Achitophel*<sup>5</sup>; but he had read Addison's Latin poems, and admired them greatly. They had given him, he said, quite a new notion of the state of learning and taste among the English. Johnson will have it that these praises were insincere. 'Nothing,' says he, 'is better known of Boileau than that he had an injudicious and peevish contempt of modern Latin; and therefore his profession of regard was probably the effect of his civility rather than approbation.' Now, nothing is better known of Boileau than that he was singularly sparing of compliments. We do not remember that either friendship or fear ever induced him to bestow praise on any composition which he did not approve. On literary questions, his caustic, disdainful, and self-confident spirit rebelled against that authority to which everything else in France bowed down. He had the spirit to tell Lewis the Fourteenth firmly and even rudely, that his Majesty knew nothing about poetry, and admired verses which were detestable. What was there in Addison's position that could induce the satirist, whose stern and fastidious temper had been the dread of two generations, to turn sycophant for the first and last time? Nor was Boileau's contempt of modern Latin either injudicious or peevish.

<sup>1</sup> [Sir Joshua Reynolds, the painter.]

<sup>2</sup> [Famous for her wit and her friendship with Dr. Johnson.]

<sup>3</sup> [The well-known German poet.]

<sup>4</sup> [The German poet and critic.]

<sup>5</sup> [Dryden's great satire on Shaftesbury and the Popish plot.]



He thought, indeed, that no poem of the first order would ever be written in a dead language. And did he think amiss? Has not the experience of centuries confirmed his opinion? Boileau also thought it probable that, in the best modern Latin, a writer of the Augustan age would have detected ludicrous improprieties. And who can think otherwise? What modern scholar can honestly declare that he sees the smallest impurity in the style of Livy? Yet is it not certain that, in the style of Livy, Pollio<sup>1</sup>, whose taste had been formed on the banks of the Tiber, detected the inelegant idiom of the Po? Has any modern scholar understood Latin better than Frederic the Great understood French? Yet is it not notorious that Frederic the Great, after reading, speaking, writing French, and nothing but French, during more than half a century, after unlearning his mother tongue in order to learn French, after living familiarly during many years with French associates, could not, to the last, compose in French, without imminent risk of committing some mistake which would have moved a smile in the literary circles of Paris? Do we believe that Erasmus<sup>2</sup> and Fracastorius<sup>3</sup> wrote Latin as well as Dr. Robertson<sup>4</sup> and Sir Walter Scott wrote English? And are there not in the *Dissertation on India*, the last of Dr. Robertson's works, in *Waverley*, in *Marmion*, Scotticisms at which a London apprentice would laugh? But does it follow, because we think thus, that we can find nothing to admire in the noble alcaics<sup>5</sup> of Gray<sup>6</sup>, or in the playful elegiacs of Vincent Bourne<sup>7</sup>? Surely not.

<sup>1</sup> [An orator, poet, and historian, of the Augustan age.]

<sup>2</sup> [The most famous scholar in Europe in the early sixteenth century, the friend of Colet and More.]

<sup>3</sup> [An Italian poet and physician, contemporary with Erasmus.]

<sup>4</sup> [1721-1793. Noted as the author of the *History of Scotland*.]

<sup>5</sup> [The name given to a particular kind of lyric metre, used by Gray in his Latin poems. See the lines prefixed to Byron's poem, *The Tear*.]

<sup>6</sup> [1716-1771.]

<sup>7</sup> [A noted Latin versifier of the earlier half of the eighteenth century. Many of his poems were translated by Cowper. The elegiac metre consists of alternate Hexameters and Pentameters, and is imitated by the lines of Coleridge:

In the Hexameter rises the fountain's silvery column,  
In the Pentameter aye falling in melody back.]



Nor was Boileau so ignorant or tasteless as to be incapable of appreciating good modern Latin. In the very letter to which Johnson alludes, Boileau says—‘Ne croyez pas pourtant que je veuille par là blâmer les vers Latins que vous m’avez envoyés d’un de vos illustres académiciens. Je les ai trouvés fort beaux, et dignes de Vida<sup>1</sup> et de Sannazar<sup>2</sup>, mais non pas d’Horace et de Virgile.’ Several poems, in modern Latin, have been praised by Boileau quite as liberally as it was his habit to praise anything. He says, for example, of the Père Fraguier’s<sup>3</sup> epigrams, that Catullus seems to have come to life again. But the best proof that Boileau did not feel the undiscerning contempt for modern Latin verses which has been imputed to him, is, that he wrote and published Latin verses in several metres. Indeed it happens, curiously enough, that the most severe censure ever pronounced by him on modern Latin is conveyed in Latin hexameters. We allude to the fragment which begins—

Quid numeris iterum me balbutire Latinis,  
Longe Alpes citra natum de patre Sicambro  
Musa, jubes ?<sup>4</sup>

For these reasons we feel assured that the praise which Boileau bestowed on the *Machinae Gesticulantes*, and the *Gerano-Pygmachia*<sup>5</sup>, was sincere. He certainly opened himself to Addison with a freedom which was a sure indication of esteem. Literature was the chief subject of conversation. The old man talked on his favourite theme much and well, indeed, as his young hearer thought, incomparably well. Boileau had undoubtedly some of the qualities of a great critic. He wanted imagination ; but he had strong sense. His literary code was formed on

<sup>1</sup> [An Italian poet and scholar who composed Latin verse in the first half of the sixteenth century.]

<sup>2</sup> [1458–1530. An Italian poet whose chief work, the *Arcadia*, was used by Sir Philip Sidney.]

<sup>3</sup> [1666–1728. A Jesuit and scholar, author of various verses and dissertations.]

<sup>4</sup> [‘Why, O Muse, do you bid me again stammer in Latin verses, me who am born of a Sigambrian father far on this side the Alps ?’]

<sup>5</sup> [Two Latin poems of Addison : one on a Puppet-show, the other on the battle of Pygmies and Cranes.]



narrow principles ; but in applying it, he showed great judgement and penetration. In mere style, abstracted from the ideas of which style is the garb, his taste was excellent. He was well acquainted with the great Greek writers ; and, though unable fully to appreciate their creative genius, admired the majestic simplicity of their manner, and had learned from them to despise bombast and tinsel. It is easy, we think, to discover, in the *Spectator* and the *Guardian*, traces of the influence, in part salutary and in part pernicious, which the mind of Boileau had on the mind of Addison.

While Addison was at Paris, an event took place which made that capital a disagreeable residence for an Englishman and a Whig. Charles, second of the name, King of Spain, died ; and bequeathed his dominions to Philip, Duke of Anjou, a younger son of the Dauphin. The King of France, in direct violation of his engagements both with Great Britain and with the States General, accepted the bequest on behalf of his grandson. The House of Bourbon was at the summit of human grandeur. England had been outwitted, and found herself in a situation at once degrading and perilous. The people of France, not presaging the calamities by which they were destined to expiate the perfidy of their sovereign, went mad with pride and delight. Every man looked as if a great estate had just been left him. 'The French conversation,' said Addison, 'begins to grow insupportable ; that which was before the vainest nation in the world is now worse than ever.' Sick of the arrogant exultation of the Parisians, and probably foreseeing that the peace between France and England could not be of long duration, he set off for Italy.

In December 1700<sup>1</sup> he embarked at Marseilles. As he glided along the Ligurian coast, he was delighted by the sight of myrtles and olive-trees, which retained their verdure under the winter solstice. Soon, however, he encountered one of the black storms of the Mediterranean.

<sup>1</sup> It is strange that Addison should, in the first line of his travels, have misdated his departure from Marseilles by a whole year, and still more strange that this slip of the pen, which throws the whole narrative into inextricable confusion, should have been repeated in a succession of editions, and never detected by Tickell or by Hurd. (Macaulay.)



The captain of the ship gave up all for lost, and confessed himself to a capuchin who happened to be on board. The English heretic, in the meantime, fortified himself against the terrors of death with devotions of a very different kind. How strong an impression this perilous voyage made on him, appears from the ode, 'How are thy servants blest, O Lord!' which was long after published in the *Spectator*. After some days of discomfort and danger, Addison was glad to land at Savona, and to make his way, over mountains where no road had yet been hewn out by art to the city of Genoa.

At Genoa, still ruled by her own Doge, and by the nobles whose names were inscribed on her Book of Gold, Addison made a short stay. He admired the narrow streets overhung by long lines of towering palaces, the walls rich with frescoes, the gorgeous temple of the Annunciation, and the tapestries whereon were recorded the long glories of the house of Doria<sup>1</sup>. Thence he hastened to Milan, where he contemplated the Gothic magnificence of the cathedral with more wonder than pleasure. He passed Lake Benacus while a gale was blowing, and saw the waves raging as they raged when Virgil looked up at them. At Venice, then the gayest spot in Europe, the traveller spent the Carnival, the gayest season of the year, in the midst of masques, dances, and serenades. Here he was at once diverted and provoked, by the absurd dramatic pieces which then disgraced the Italian stage. To one of those pieces, however, he was indebted for a valuable hint. He was present when a ridiculous play on the death of Cato<sup>2</sup> was performed. Cato, it seems, was in love with a daughter of Scipio<sup>3</sup>. The lady had given her heart to Caesar. The rejected lover determined to destroy himself. He appeared seated in his library, a dagger in his hand, a Plutarch and a Tasso before him; and, in this position, he pronounced a soliloquy before he struck the blow. We are surprised that so remarkable a circumstance as this should have escaped the notice of all Addison's biographers. There

<sup>1</sup> [One of the best known of the noble families of Genoa.]

<sup>2</sup> [A leader of the Senatorial party in the Civil War: defeated by Julius Caesar at Thapsus, B.C. 46.]

<sup>3</sup> [Probably the Scipio who was consul in B.C. 83.]



cannot, we conceive, be the smallest doubt that this scene, in spite of its absurdities and anachronisms, struck the traveller's imagination, and suggested to him the thought of bringing Cato on the English stage. It is well known that about this time he began his tragedy, and that he finished the first four acts before he returned to England.

On his way from Venice to Rome, he was drawn some miles out of the beaten road, by a wish to see the smallest independent state in Europe. On a rock where the snow still lay, though the Italian spring was now far advanced, was perched the little fortress of San Marino. The roads which led to the secluded town were so bad that few travellers had ever visited it, and none had ever published an account of it. Addison could not suppress a good-natured smile at the simple manners and institutions of this singular community. But he observed, with the exultation of a Whig, that the rude mountain tract which formed the territory of the republic swarmed with an honest, healthy, and contented peasantry, while the rich plain which surrounded the metropolis of civil and spiritual tyranny was scarcely less desolate than the uncleared wilds of America.

At Rome Addison remained on his first visit only long enough to catch a glimpse of St. Peter's and of the Pantheon. His haste is the more extraordinary because the Holy Week was close at hand. He has given no hint which can enable us to pronounce why he chose to fly from a spectacle which every year allures from distant regions persons of far less taste and sensibility than his. Possibly, travelling, as he did, at the charge of a Government distinguished by its enmity to the Church of Rome, he may have thought that it would be imprudent in him to assist at the most magnificent rite of that Church. Many eyes would be upon him; and he might find it difficult to behave in such a manner as to give offence neither to his patrons in England, nor to those among whom he resided. Whatever his motives may have been, he turned his back on the most august and affecting ceremony which is known among men, and posted along the Appian Way to Naples.

Naples was then destitute of what are now, perhaps, its chief attractions. The lovely bay and the awful mountain



were indeed there. But a farmhouse stood on the theatre of Herculaneum, and rows of vines grew over the streets of Pompeii. The temples of Paestum had not indeed been hidden from the eye of man by any great convulsion of nature; but, strange to say, their existence was a secret even to artists and antiquaries. Though situated within a few hours' journey of a great capital, where Salvator<sup>1</sup> had not long before painted, and where Vico<sup>2</sup> was then lecturing, those noble remains were as little known to Europe as the ruined cities overgrown by the forests of Yucatan<sup>3</sup>. What was to be seen at Naples, Addison saw. He climbed Vesuvius, explored the tunnel of Posilipo, and wandered among the vines and almond-trees of Capreae. But neither the wonders of nature, nor those of art, could so occupy his attention as to prevent him from noticing, though cursorily, the abuses of the government and the misery of the people. The great kingdom which had just descended to Philip the Fifth, was in a state of paralytic dotage. Even Castile and Aragon were sunk in wretchedness. Yet, compared with the Italian dependencies of the Spanish crown, Castile and Aragon might be called prosperous. It is clear that all the observations which Addison made in Italy tended to confirm him in the political opinions which he had adopted at home. To the last, he always spoke of foreign travel as the best cure for Jacobitism. In his *Freeholder*, the Tory foxhunter asks what travelling is good for, except to teach a man to jabber French, and to talk against passive obedience.

From Naples, Addison returned to Rome by sea, along the coast which his favourite Virgil had celebrated. The felucca<sup>4</sup> passed the headland where the oar and trumpet were placed by the Trojan adventurers on the tomb of Misenus<sup>5</sup>, and anchored at night under the shelter of the fabled promontory of Circe<sup>6</sup>. The voyage ended in the

<sup>1</sup> [Salvator Rosa, a great Italian landscape-painter.]

<sup>2</sup> [1668-1744. An Italian philosopher.]

<sup>3</sup> [A State on the east coast of Mexico.]

<sup>4</sup> [A small six-oared boat used in the Mediterranean.]

<sup>5</sup> [Hector's trumpeter, who followed Aeneas to Italy and was drowned off the coast of Campania. See Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi. 173.]

<sup>6</sup> [The enchantress mentioned in the *Odyssey* who changed men to beasts.]



Tiber, still overhung with dark verdure, and still turbid with yellow sand, as when it met the eyes of Aeneas. From the ruined port of Ostia, the stranger hurried to Rome; and at Rome he remained during those hot and sickly months when, even in the Augustan age, all who could make their escape fled from mad dogs and from streets black with funerals, to gather the first figs of the season in the country. It is probable that, when he, long after, poured forth in verse his gratitude to the Providence which had enabled him to breathe unhurt in tainted air, he was thinking of the August and September which he passed at Rome.

It was not till the latter end of October that he tore himself away from the masterpieces of ancient and modern art which are collected in the city so long the mistress of the world. He then journeyed northward, passed through Sienna, and for a moment forgot his prejudices in favour of classic architecture as he looked on the magnificent cathedral. At Florence he spent some days with the Duke of Shrewsbury, who, cloyed with the pleasures of ambition, and impatient of its pains, fearing both parties, and loving neither, had determined to hide in an Italian retreat talents and accomplishments which, if they had been united with fixed principles and civil courage, might have made him the foremost man of his age. These days, we are told, passed pleasantly; and we can easily believe it. For Addison was a delightful companion when he was at his ease; and the Duke, though he seldom forgot that he was a Talbot, had the invaluable art of putting at ease all who came near him.

Addison gave some time to Florence, and especially to the sculptures in the Museum, which he preferred even to those of the Vatican. He then pursued his journey through a country in which the ravages of the last war were still discernible, and in which all men were looking forward with dread to a still fiercer conflict. Eugene<sup>1</sup> had already

<sup>1</sup> [Prince of Savoy. One of the most famous generals of history. He led the Austrian troops against France during the War of the Spanish Succession, and defeated the French general, Catinat, in 1701. He was Marlborough's ally during the war in the Netherlands.]



descended from the Rhaetian Alps<sup>1</sup>, to dispute with Catinat<sup>2</sup> the rich plain of Lombardy. The faithless ruler of Savoy<sup>3</sup> was still reckoned among the allies of Lewis. England had not yet actually declared war against France: but Manchester had left Paris; and the negotiations which produced the Grand Alliance<sup>4</sup> against the House of Bourbon were in progress. Under such circumstances, it was desirable for an English traveller to reach neutral ground without delay. Addison resolved to cross Mont Cenis. It was December; and the road was very different from that which now reminds the stranger of the power and genius of Napoleon. The winter, however, was mild; and the passage was, for those times, easy. To this journey Addison alluded when, in the ode which we have already quoted, he said that for him the Divine goodness had warmed the hoary Alpine hills.

It was in the midst of the eternal snow that he composed his *Epistle* to his friend Montague, now Lord Halifax. That *Epistle*, once widely renowned, is now known only to curious readers, and will hardly be considered by those to whom it is known as in any perceptible degree heightening Addison's fame. It is, however, decidedly superior to any English composition which he had previously published. Nay, we think it quite as good as any poem in heroic metre which appeared during the interval between the death of Dryden and the publication of the *Essay on Criticism*<sup>5</sup>. It contains passages as good as the second-rate passages of Pope, and would have added to the reputation of Parnell or Prior.

But, whatever be the literary merits or defects of the *Epistle*, it undoubtedly does honour to the principles and spirit of the author. Halifax had now nothing to give. He had fallen from power, had been held up to obloquy, had been impeached by the House of Commons, and, though his Peers had dismissed the impeachment, had, as

<sup>1</sup> [Between Switzerland and Austria.]

<sup>2</sup> [The French general.]

<sup>3</sup> [Victor Amadeus; cf. p. 36.]

<sup>4</sup> [The name given to the alliance formed in 1689 between England, Holland, Saxony, Austria, and Spain, against Louis XIV.]

<sup>5</sup> [Dryden died in 1700. Pope's *Essay on Criticism* was published in 1711.]



it seemed, little chance of ever again filling high office. The *Epistle*, written at such a time, is one among many proofs that there was no mixture of cowardice or meanness in the suavity and moderation which distinguished Addison from all the other public men of those stormy times.

At Geneva, the traveller learned that a partial change of ministry had taken place in England, and that the Earl of Manchester had become Secretary of State. Manchester exerted himself to serve his young friend. It was thought advisable that an English agent should be near the person of Eugene in Italy ; and Addison, whose diplomatic education was now finished, was the man selected. He was preparing to enter on his honourable functions, when all his prospects were for a time darkened by the death of William the Third.

Anne had long felt a strong aversion, personal, political, and religious, to the Whig party. That aversion appeared in the first measures of her reign. Manchester was deprived of the seals, after he had held them only a few weeks. Neither Somers nor Halifax was sworn of the Privy Council. Addison shared the fate of his three patrons. His hopes of employment in the public service were at an end ; his pension was stopped ; and it was necessary for him to support himself by his own exertions. He became tutor to a young English traveller, and appears to have rambled with his pupil over great part of Switzerland and Germany. At this time he wrote his pleasing *Treatise on Medals*. It was not published till after his death ; but several distinguished scholars saw the manuscript, and gave just praise to the grace of the style, and to the learning and ingenuity evinced by the quotations.

From Germany Addison repaired to Holland, where he learned the melancholy news of his father's death. After passing some months in the United Provinces, he returned about the close of the year 1703 to England. He was there cordially received by his friends, and introduced by them into the Kit Cat Club, a society in which were collected all the various talents and accomplishments which then gave lustre to the Whig party.

Addison was, during some months after his return from



the Continent, hard pressed by pecuniary difficulties. But it was soon in the power of his noble patrons to serve him effectually. A political change, silent and gradual, but of the highest importance, was in daily progress. The accession of Anne had been hailed by the Tories with transports of joy and hope ; and for a time it seemed that the Whigs had fallen never to rise again. The throne was surrounded by men supposed to be attached to the prerogative and to the Church ; and among these none stood so high in the favour of the sovereign as the Lord Treasurer Godolphin and the Captain General Marlborough.

The country gentlemen and country clergymen had fully expected that the policy of these ministers would be directly opposed to that which had been almost constantly followed by William ; that the landed interest would be favoured at the expense of trade ; that no addition would be made to the funded debt ; that the privileges conceded to Dissenters by the late King would be curtailed, if not withdrawn ; that the war with France, if there must be such a war, would, on our part, be almost entirely naval ; and that the Government would avoid close connexions with foreign powers, and, above all, with Holland.

But the country gentlemen and country clergymen were fated to be deceived, not for the last time. The prejudices and passions which raged without control in vicarages, in cathedral closes, and in the manor-houses of fox-hunting squires, were not shared by the chiefs of the ministry. Those statesmen saw that it was both for the public interest, and for their own interest, to adopt a Whig policy, at least as respected the alliances of the country and the conduct of the war. But, if the foreign policy of the Whigs were adopted, it was impossible to abstain from adopting also their financial policy. The natural consequences followed. The rigid Tories were alienated from the Government. The votes of the Whigs became necessary to it. The votes of the Whigs could be secured only by further concessions ; and further concessions the Queen was induced to make.

At the beginning of the year 1704, the state of parties bore a close analogy to the state of parties in 1826. In 1826, as in 1704, there was a Tory ministry divided into



two hostile sections. The position of Mr. Canning<sup>1</sup> and his friends in 1826 corresponded to that which Marlborough and Godolphin<sup>2</sup> occupied in 1704. Nottingham and Jersey<sup>3</sup> were, in 1704, what Lord Eldon<sup>4</sup> and Lord Westmoreland<sup>5</sup> were in 1826. The Whigs of 1704 were in a situation resembling that in which the Whigs of 1826 stood. In 1704, Somers, Halifax, Sunderland<sup>6</sup>, Cowper<sup>7</sup>, were not in office. There was no avowed coalition between them and the moderate Tories. It is probable that no direct communication tending to such a coalition had yet taken place; yet all men saw that such a coalition was inevitable, nay, that it was already half formed. Such, or nearly such, was the state of things when tidings arrived of the great battle fought at Blenheim on the 13th August, 1704. By the Whigs the news was hailed with transports of joy and pride. No fault, no cause of quarrel, could be remembered by them against the Commander whose genius had, in one day, changed the face of Europe, saved the Imperial throne, humbled the House of Bourbon, and secured the Act of Settlement against foreign hostility. The feeling of the Tories was very different. They could not indeed, without imprudence, openly express regret at an event so glorious to their country; but their congratulations were so cold and sullen as to give deep disgust to the victorious general and his friends.

Godolphin was not a reading man. Whatever time he could spare from business he was in the habit of spending at Newmarket<sup>8</sup> or at the card-table. But he was not

<sup>1</sup> [Leader of the Tory party, who, in 1827, found himself forced into an alliance with the Whigs.]

<sup>2</sup> [One of the leaders of the moderate Tories in 1698.]

<sup>3</sup> [In 1704 Nottingham, who was Secretary of State, resigned office because he disapproved of Godolphin's friendly attitude towards the Whigs. Jersey, who was a member of Nottingham's party, lost office at the same time.]

<sup>4</sup> [One of the leaders of the extreme Tories, who resigned office in 1827 because he disapproved of Canning's policy of conciliation.]

<sup>5</sup> [A conspicuous member of Eldon's party.]

<sup>6</sup> [A prominent Whig.]

<sup>7</sup> [A member of Somers's party. He lost his seat in 1702, but in 1705 he was made Lord Keeper, and in 1707 became the first Lord Chancellor of Great Britain.]

<sup>8</sup> [In Cambridgeshire. The racecourse was first established there by Charles II in 1667.]



absolutely indifferent to poetry ; and he was too intelligent an observer not to perceive that literature was a formidable engine of political warfare, and that the great Whig leaders had strengthened their party, and raised their character, by extending a liberal and judicious patronage to good writers. He was mortified, and not without reason, by the exceeding badness of the poems which appeared in honour of the battle of Blenheim. One of these poems has been rescued from oblivion by the exquisite absurdity of three lines.

Think of two thousand gentlemen at least,  
And each man mounted on his capering beast ;  
Into the Danube they were pushed by shoals.

Where to procure better verses the Treasurer did not know. He understood how to negotiate a loan, or remit a subsidy : he was also well versed in the history of running horses and fighting cocks ; but his acquaintance among the poets was very small. He consulted Halifax ; but Halifax affected to decline the office of adviser. He had, he said, done his best, when he had power, to encourage men whose abilities and acquirements might do honour to their country. Those times were over. Other maxims had prevailed. Merit was suffered to pine in obscurity ; and the public money was squandered on the undeserving. ' I do know,' he added, ' a gentleman who would celebrate the battle in a manner worthy of the subject ; but I will not name him.' Godolphin, who was an expert at the soft answer which turneth away wrath, and who was under the necessity of paying court to the Whigs, gently replied that there was too much ground for Halifax's complaints, but that what was amiss should in time be rectified, and that in the meantime the services of a man such as Halifax had described should be liberally rewarded. Halifax then mentioned Addison, but, mindful of the dignity as well as of the pecuniary interest of his friend, insisted that the Minister should apply in the most courteous manner to Addison himself ; and this Godolphin promised to do.

Addison then occupied a garret up three pair of stairs, over a small shop in the Haymarket. In this humble



lodging he was surprised, on the morning which followed the conversation between Godolphin and Halifax, by a visit from no less a person than the Right Honourable Henry Boyle, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and afterwards Lord Carleton. This high-born minister had been sent by the Lord Treasurer as ambassador to the needy poet. Addison readily undertook the proposed task, a task which, to so good a Whig, was probably a pleasure. When the poem was little more than half finished, he showed it to Godolphin, who was delighted with it, and particularly with the famous similitude of the Angel<sup>1</sup>. Addison was instantly appointed to a Commissionership worth about two hundred pounds a year, and was assured that this appointment was only an earnest of greater favours.

The *Campaign* came forth, and was as much admired by the public as by the Minister. It pleases us less on the whole than the *Epistle to Halifax*. Yet it undoubtedly ranks high among the poems which appeared during the interval between the death of Dryden and the dawn of Pope's genius. The chief merit of the *Campaign*, we think, is that which was noticed by Johnson, the manly and rational rejection of fiction. The first great poet whose works have come down to us sang of war long before war became a science or a trade. If, in his time, there was enmity between two little Greek towns, each poured forth its crowd of citizens, ignorant of discipline, and armed with implements of labour rudely turned into weapons. On each side appeared conspicuous a few chiefs, whose wealth had enabled them to procure good armour, horses, and chariots, and whose leisure had enabled them to practise military exercises. One such chief, if he were a man of great strength, agility, and courage, would probably be more formidable than twenty common men; and the force and dexterity with which he flung his spear might have no inconsiderable share in deciding the event of the day. Such were probably the battles with which Homer was familiar. But Homer related the actions of men of a former generation, of men who sprang from the Gods, and communed with the Gods face to face, of men, one of

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. p. 97.]



whom could with ease hurl rocks which two sturdy hinds of a later period would be unable even to lift. He therefore naturally represented their martial exploits as resembling in kind, but far surpassing in magnitude, those of the stoutest and most expert combatants of his own age. Achilles, clad in celestial armour, drawn by celestial coursers, grasping the spear which none but himself could raise, driving all Troy and Lycia<sup>1</sup> before him, and choking Scamander<sup>2</sup> with dead, was only a magnificent exaggeration of the real hero, who, strong, fearless, accustomed to the use of weapons, guarded by a shield and helmet of the best Sidonian fabric<sup>3</sup>, and whirled along by horses of Thessalian<sup>4</sup> breed, struck down with his own right arm foe after foe. In all rude societies similar notions are found. There are at this day countries where the Lifeguardsman Shaw<sup>5</sup> would be considered as a much greater warrior than the Duke of Wellington. Buonaparte loved to describe the astonishment with which the Mamelukes<sup>6</sup> looked at his diminutive figure. Mourad Bey<sup>7</sup>, distinguished above all his fellows by his bodily strength, and by the skill with which he managed his horse and his sabre, could not believe that a man who was scarcely five feet high, and rode like a butcher, could be the greatest soldier in Europe.

Homer's descriptions of war had therefore as much truth as poetry requires. But truth was altogether wanting to the performances of those who, writing about battles which had scarcely anything in common with the battles of his times, servilely imitated his manner. The folly of Silius Italicus, in particular, is positively nauseous. He undertook to record in verse the vicissitudes of a great

[The Lycians (south of Asia Minor) are mentioned as allies of the Trojans, *Iliad*, ii. 876.]

<sup>2</sup> [A river near Troy.]

<sup>3</sup> [Sidon was famous for metal-work. See *Iliad*, xxiii. 743.]

<sup>4</sup> [Thessaly was famous for horses; and was the native country of Achilles.]

<sup>5</sup> [A noted prize-fighter who enlisted in the Guards. He fell at Waterloo.]

<sup>6</sup> [A name given to a certain race of Egyptians, who were of Syrian origin.]

<sup>7</sup> [Leader of the Egyptians against Bonaparte in 1798.]



struggle between generals of the first order : and his narrative is made up of the hideous wounds which these generals inflicted with their own hands. Asdrubal flings a spear which grazes the shoulder of the consul Nero ; but Nero sends his spear into Asdrubal's side. Fabius slays Thuris and Butes and Maris and Arses, and the long-haired Adherbes, and the gigantic Thylis, and Sapharus and Monaesus, and the trumpeter Morinus. Hannibal runs Perusinus through the groin with a stake, and breaks the backbone of Telesinus with a huge stone. This detestable fashion was copied in modern times, and continued to prevail down to the age of Addison. Several versifiers had described William turning thousands to flight by his single prowess, and dyeing the Boyne with Irish blood. Nay, so estimable a writer as John Philips, the author of the *Splendid Shilling*<sup>1</sup>, represented Marlborough as having won the battle of Blenheim merely by strength of muscle and skill in fence. The following lines may serve as an example :

Churchill, viewing where  
The violence of Tallard most prevailed,  
Came to oppose his slaughtering arm. With speed  
Precipitate he rode, urging his way  
O'er hills of gasping heroes, and fallen steeds  
Rolling in death. Destruction, grim with blood,  
Attends his furious course. Around his head  
The glowing balls play innocent, while he  
With dire impetuous sway deals fatal blows  
Among the flying Gauls. In Gallic blood  
He dyes his reeking sword, and strews the ground  
With headless ranks. What can they do ? Or how  
Withstand his wide-destroying sword ?

Addison, with excellent sense and taste, departed from this ridiculous fashion. He reserved his praise for the qualities which made Marlborough truly great, energy, sagacity, military science. But, above all, the poet extolled the firmness of that mind which, in the midst of confusion,

<sup>1</sup> [A mock-heroic poem in imitation of Milton, published in 1701.]



uproar, and slaughter, examined and disposed everything with the serene wisdom of a higher intelligence.

Here it was that he introduced the famous comparison of Marlborough to an Angel guiding the whirlwind. We will not dispute the general justice of Johnson's remarks on this passage. But we must point out one circumstance which appears to have escaped all the critics. The extraordinary effect which this simile produced when it first appeared, and which to the following generation seemed inexplicable, is doubtless to be chiefly attributed to a line which most readers now regard as a feeble parenthesis,

Such as, of late, o'er pale Britannia pass'd.

Addison spoke, not of a storm, but of the storm. The great tempest of November 1703, the only tempest which in our latitude has equalled the rage of a tropical hurricane, had left a dreadful recollection in the minds of all men. No other tempest was ever in this country the occasion of a parliamentary address or of a public fast. Whole fleets had been cast away. Large mansions had been blown down. One Prelate had been buried beneath the ruins of his palace. London and Bristol had presented the appearance of cities just sacked. Hundreds of families were still in mourning. The prostrate trunks of large trees, and the ruins of houses, still attested, in all the southern counties, the fury of the blast. The popularity which the simile of the angel enjoyed among Addison's contemporaries, has always seemed to us to be a remarkable instance of the advantage which, in rhetoric and poetry, the particular has over the general.

Soon after the *Campaign*, was published Addison's *Narrative of his Travels in Italy*<sup>1</sup>. The first effect produced by this Narrative was disappointment. The crowd of readers who expected politics and scandal, speculations on the projects of Victor Amadeus<sup>2</sup>, and anecdotes about the jollities of convents and the amours of cardinals and nuns, were confounded by finding that the writer's mind was much more occupied by the war between the Trojans and

<sup>1</sup> [i. e. *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy*, 1705.]

<sup>2</sup> [Duke of Savoy, cf. p. 28.]



Rutulians<sup>1</sup> than by the war between France and Austria; and that he seemed to have heard no scandal of later date than the gallantries of the Empress Faustina<sup>2</sup>. In time, however, the judgement of the many was overruled by that of the few; and, before the book was reprinted, it was so eagerly sought that it sold for five times the original price. It is still read with pleasure: the style is pure and flowing; the classical quotations and allusions are numerous and happy; and we are now and then charmed by that singularly humane and delicate humour in which Addison excelled all men. Yet this agreeable work, even when considered merely as the history of a literary tour, may justly be censured on account of its faults of omission. We have already said that, though rich in extracts from the Latin poets, it contains scarcely any references to the Latin orators and historians. We must add, that it contains little, or rather no information, respecting the history and literature of modern Italy. To the best of our remembrance, Addison does not mention Dante<sup>3</sup>, Petrarch<sup>4</sup>, Boccaccio<sup>5</sup>, Boiardo<sup>6</sup>, Berni<sup>7</sup>, Lorenzo de' Medici<sup>8</sup>, or Machiavelli<sup>9</sup>. He coldly tells us, that at Ferrara he saw the tomb of Ariosto<sup>10</sup>, and that at Venice he heard the gondoliers sing verses of Tasso<sup>11</sup>. But for Tasso and Ariosto he cared far less than for Valerius Flaccus<sup>12</sup> and Sidonius Apollinaris<sup>13</sup>. The gentle flow of the Ticin<sup>14</sup> brings a line

<sup>1</sup> [A tribe which lived south of the Tiber. Aeneas fell while fighting against them.]

<sup>2</sup> [Wife of Antoninus Pius, - noted for her evil life. She died in A.D. 141.]

<sup>3</sup> [1265-1321.]

<sup>4</sup> [1304-1374.]

<sup>5</sup> [1313-1375.]

<sup>6</sup> [Author of *Orlando Inamorato*, of which Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* is a continuation.]

<sup>7</sup> [An Italian poet of the early sixteenth century. His chief work was a re-casting of *Orlando Inamorato*.]

<sup>8</sup> [Virtual ruler of Florence from 1469 to 1492; noted as a patron of art and literature.]

<sup>9</sup> [1469-1527.]

<sup>10</sup> [1474-1533.]

<sup>11</sup> [1544-1595.]

<sup>12</sup> [A minor poet of the time of Vespasian; author of an unfinished poem on the Argonauts.]

<sup>13</sup> [A poet of the fifth century, A.D.]

<sup>14</sup> [A tributary of the Po: scene of a Roman defeat in the Second Punic War.]



of Silius to his mind. The sulphurous steam of Albula<sup>1</sup> suggests to him several passages of Martial<sup>2</sup>. But he has not a word to say of the illustrious dead of Santa Croce<sup>3</sup>; he crosses the wood of Ravenna without recollecting the Spectre Huntsman<sup>4</sup>, and wanders up and down Rimini without one thought of Francesca<sup>5</sup>. At Paris, he had eagerly sought an introduction to Boileau; but he seems not to have been at all aware that at Florence he was in the vicinity of a poet with whom Boileau could not sustain a comparison, of the greatest lyric poet of modern times, Vincenzo Filicaja<sup>6</sup>. This is the more remarkable, because Filicaja was the favourite poet of the accomplished Somers, under whose protection Addison travelled, and to whom the account of the Travels is dedicated. The truth is, that Addison knew little, and cared less, about the literature of modern Italy. His favourite models were Latin. His favourite critics were French. Half the Tuscan poetry that he had read seemed to him monstrous, and the other half tawdry.

His *Travels* were followed by the lively Opera of *Rosamond*. This piece was ill set to music, and therefore failed on the stage, but it completely succeeded in print, and is indeed excellent in its kind. The smoothness with which the verses glide, and the elasticity with which they bound, is, to our ears at least, very pleasing. We are inclined to think that if Addison had left heroic couplets to Pope, and blank verse to Rowe<sup>7</sup>, and had employed himself in writing airy and spirited songs, his reputation as a poet would have stood far higher than it now does. Some years after his death, *Rosamond* was set to new music by Doctor Arne; and was performed with complete success. Several pas-

<sup>1</sup> [An ancient name for the Tiber.]

<sup>2</sup> [A poet of the second century, A.D., noted for his epigrams.]

<sup>3</sup> [The church in Florence in which Michael Angelo is buried, and which also contains monuments to Dante, Macchiavelli, Alfieri, and many other poets, artists, and politicians.]

<sup>4</sup> [This legend is told by Boccaccio, *Decamerone*, Fifth Day, eighth story.]

<sup>5</sup> [The story of Francesca da Rimini and her lover Paolo is told by Dante in the fifth canto of the *Inferno*.]

<sup>6</sup> [1642-1707.]

<sup>7</sup> [1673-1718. Author of several unsuccessful plays, and editor of Shakespeare.]



sages long retained their popularity, and were daily sung, during the latter part of George the Second's reign, at all the harpsichords in England.

While Addison thus amused himself, his prospects, and the prospects of his party, were constantly becoming brighter and brighter. In the spring of 1705, the ministers were freed from the restraint imposed by a House of Commons, in which Tories of the most perverse class had the ascendancy. The elections were favourable to the Whigs. The coalition which had been tacitly and gradually formed was now openly avowed. The Great Seal was given to Cowper. Somers and Halifax were sworn of the Council. Halifax was sent in the following year to carry the decorations of the order of the garter to the Electoral Prince of Hanover, and was accompanied on this honourable mission by Addison, who had just been made Under-secretary of State. The Secretary of State under whom Addison first served was Sir Charles Hedges, a Tory. But Hedges was soon dismissed, to make room for the most vehement of Whigs, Charles, Earl of Sunderland. In every department of the state, indeed, the High Churchmen were compelled to give place to their opponents. At the close of 1707, the Tories who still remained in office strove to rally, with Harley<sup>1</sup> at their head. But the attempt, though favoured by the Queen, who had always been a Tory at heart, and who had now quarrelled with the Duchess of Marlborough, was unsuccessful. The time was not yet. The Captain General was at the height of popularity and glory. The Low Church party had a majority in Parliament. The country squires and rectors, though occasionally uttering a savage growl, were for the most part in a state of torpor, which lasted till they were roused into activity, and indeed into madness, by the prosecution of Sacheverell<sup>2</sup>. Harley and his adherents were compelled to retire. The victory of the Whigs was complete. At the general election of 1708, their strength in the House of Commons became irresistible; and, before the end of that year, Somers was

<sup>1</sup> [Earl of Oxford.]

<sup>2</sup> [A divine who preached against the Whigs, and against Godolphin in particular. He was impeached in 1709, and the Tories took advantage of his trial, to make a great demonstration.]



made Lord President of the Council, and Wharton<sup>1</sup> Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Addison sat for Malmsbury in the House of Commons which was elected in 1708. But the House of Commons was not the field for him. The bashfulness of his nature made his wit and eloquence useless in debate. He once rose, but could not overcome his diffidence, and ever after remained silent. Nobody can think it strange that a great writer should fail as a speaker. But many, probably, will think it strange that Addison's failure as a speaker should have had no unfavourable effect on his success as a politician. In our time, a man of high rank and great fortune might, though speaking very little and very ill, hold a considerable post. But it would now be inconceivable that a mere adventurer, a man who, when out of office, must live by his pen, should in a few years become successively Under-secretary of State, Chief Secretary for Ireland, and Secretary of State, without some oratorical talent. Addison, without high birth, and with little property, rose to a post which Dukes, the heads of the great houses of Talbot, Russell, and Bentinck, have thought it an honour to fill. Without opening his lips in debate, he rose to a post, the highest that Chatham or Fox ever reached. And this he did before he had been nine years in Parliament. We must look for the explanation of this seeming miracle to the peculiar circumstances in which that generation was placed. During the interval which elapsed between the time when the Censorship of the Press ceased, and the time when parliamentary proceedings began to be freely reported, literary talents were, to a public man, of much more importance, and oratorical talents of much less importance, than in our time. At present, the best way of giving rapid and wide publicity to a fact or an argument is to introduce that fact or argument into a speech made in Parliament. If a political tract were to appear superior to the *Conduct of the Allies*<sup>2</sup>, or to the best numbers of the *Freeholder*<sup>3</sup>, the circulation of such a tract would be languid indeed when

<sup>1</sup> [The Marquis of Wharton, a noted Whig.]

<sup>2</sup> [Swift's famous pamphlet of 1711, written in support of the Tory ministry.]

<sup>3</sup> [Cf. p. 73.]



compared with the circulation of every remarkable word uttered in the deliberations of the legislature. A speech made in the House of Commons at four in the morning is on thirty thousand tables before ten. A speech made on the Monday is read on the Wednesday by multitudes in Antrim and Aberdeenshire. The orator, by the help of the shorthand writer, has to a great extent superseded the pamphleteer. It was not so in the reign of Anne. The best speech could then produce no effect except on those who heard it. It was only by means of the press that the opinion of the public without-doors could be influenced: and the opinion of the public without-doors could not but be of the highest importance in a country governed by parliaments, and indeed at that time governed by triennial parliaments. The pen was therefore a more formidable political engine than the tongue. Mr. Pitt<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Fox<sup>2</sup> contended only in Parliament. But Walpole<sup>3</sup> and Pulteney<sup>4</sup>, the Pitt and Fox of an earlier period, had not done half of what was necessary, when they sat down amidst the acclamations of the House of Commons. They had still to plead their cause before the country, and this they could do only by means of the press. Their works are now forgotten. But it is certain that there were in Grub Street<sup>5</sup> few more assiduous scribblers of Thoughts, Letters, Answers, Remarks, than these two great chiefs of parties. Pulteney, when leader of the Opposition, and possessed of thirty thousand a year, edited the *Craftsman*. Walpole, though not a man of literary habits, was the author of at least ten pamphlets, and retouched and corrected many more. These facts sufficiently show of how great importance literary assistance then was to the contending parties. St. John<sup>6</sup> was, certainly, in Anne's reign, the best Tory speaker; Cowper was probably the best Whig speaker. But it may well be doubted whether St. John did so much for the Tories as Swift, and whether Cowper did so much

<sup>1</sup> [Leader of the Tory party at the end of the eighteenth century.]

<sup>2</sup> [Leader of the Whigs at the end of the eighteenth century.]

<sup>3</sup> [Sir Robert Walpole, the great Whig leader.]

<sup>4</sup> [Leader of a Whig faction known as the 'Patriots', which was joined by Pitt and the remnant of the Tories.]

<sup>5</sup> [A street near Moorfields in London, where minor authors congregated.]

<sup>6</sup> [Lord Bolingbroke.]



for the Whigs as Addison. When these things are duly considered, it will not be thought strange that Addison should have climbed higher in the state than any other Englishman has ever, by means merely of literary talents, been able to climb. Swift would, in all probability, have climbed as high, if he had not been encumbered by his cassock and his pudding sleeves. As far as the homage of the great went, Swift had as much of it as if he had been Lord Treasurer.

To the influence which Addison derived from his literary talents was added all the influence which arises from character. The world, always ready to think the worst of needy political adventurers, was forced to make one exception. Restlessness, violence, audacity, laxity of principle, are the vices ordinarily attributed to that class of men. But faction itself could not deny that Addison had, through all changes of fortune, been strictly faithful to his early opinions, and to his early friends; that his integrity was without stain; that his whole deportment indicated a fine sense of the becoming; that, in the utmost heat of controversy, his zeal was tempered by a regard for truth, humanity, and social decorum; that no outrage could ever provoke him to retaliation unworthy of a Christian and a gentleman; and that his only faults were a too sensitive delicacy, and a modesty which amounted to bashfulness.

He was undoubtedly one of the most popular men of his time; and much of his popularity he owed, we believe, to that very timidity which his friends lamented. That timidity often prevented him from exhibiting his talents to the best advantage. But it propitiated Nemesis. It averted that envy which would otherwise have been excited by fame so splendid, and by so rapid an elevation. No man is so great a favourite with the public as he who is at once an object of admiration, of respect, and of pity; and such were the feelings which Addison inspired. Those who enjoyed the privilege of hearing his familiar conversation, declared with one voice that it was superior even to his writings. The brilliant Mary Montague<sup>1</sup> said, that she

<sup>1</sup> [Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, famous as a wit and a leader of fashion. Cf. note 1, p. 93.]



had known all the wits, and that Addison was the best company in the world. The malignant Pope was forced to own, that there was a charm in Addison's talk, which could be found nowhere else. Swift, when burning with animosity against the Whigs, could not but confess to Stella<sup>1</sup> that, after all, he had never known any associate so agreeable as Addison. Steele, an excellent judge of lively conversation, said, that the conversation of Addison was at once the most polite, and the most mirthful, that could be imagined; that it was Terence and Catullus in one, heightened by an exquisite something which was neither Terence nor Catullus, but Addison alone. Young, an excellent judge of serious conversation, said, that when Addison was at his ease, he went on in a noble strain of thought and language, so as to chain the attention of every hearer. Nor were Addison's great colloquial powers more admirable than the courtesy and softness of heart which appeared in his conversation. At the same time, it would be too much to say that he was wholly devoid of the malice which is, perhaps, inseparable from a keen sense of the ludicrous. He had one habit which both Swift and Stella applauded, and which we hardly know how to blame. If his first attempts to set a presuming dunce right were ill received, he changed his tone, 'assented with civil leer,' and lured the flattered coxcomb deeper and deeper into absurdity. That such was his practice, we should, we think, have guessed from his works. The *Tatler's* criticisms on Mr. Softly's<sup>2</sup> sonnet, and the *Spectator's* dialogue with the politician who is so zealous for the honour of Lady Q—p—t—s<sup>3</sup>, are excellent specimens of this innocent mischief.

Such were Addison's talents for conversation. But his rare gifts were not exhibited to crowds or to strangers. As soon as he entered a large company, as soon as he saw an unknown face, his lips were sealed, and his manners became constrained. None who met him only in great assemblies would have been able to believe that he was

<sup>1</sup> [Hester Johnson, to whom Swift gave the name of Stella, and for whom he wrote a Journal of his life in London. He is said to have been secretly married to her. Cf. note 1, p. 96.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Tatler*, No. 163.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Spectator*, No. 568.]



the same man who had often kept a few friends listening and laughing round a table, from the time when the play ended, till the clock of St. Paul's in Covent Garden struck four. Yet, even at such a table, he was not seen to the best advantage. To enjoy his conversation in the highest perfection, it was necessary to be alone with him, and to hear him, in his own phrase, think aloud. 'There is no such thing,' he used to say, 'as real conversation, but between two persons.'

This timidity, a timidity surely neither ungraceful nor unamiable, led Addison into the two most serious faults which can with justice be imputed to him. He found that wine broke the spell which lay on his fine intellect, and was therefore too easily seduced into convivial excess. Such excess was in that age regarded, even by grave men, as the most venial of all peccadilloes, and was so far from being a mark of ill-breeding, that it was almost essential to the character of a fine gentleman. But the smallest speck is seen on a white ground; and almost all the biographers of Addison have said something about this failing. Of any other statesman or writer of Queen Anne's reign, we should no more think of saying that he sometimes took too much wine, than that he wore a long wig and a sword.

To the excessive modesty of Addison's nature, we must ascribe another fault which generally arises from a very different cause. He became a little too fond of seeing himself surrounded by a small circle of admirers, to whom he was as a King or rather as a God. All these men were far inferior to him in ability, and some of them had very serious faults. Nor did those faults escape his observation; for, if ever there was an eye which saw through and through men, it was the eye of Addison. But, with the keenest observation, and the finest sense of the ridiculous, he had a large charity. The feeling with which he looked on most of his humble companions was one of benevolence, slightly tinged with contempt. He was at perfect ease in their company; he was grateful for their devoted attachment; and he loaded them with benefits. Their veneration for him appears to have exceeded that with which Johnson was regarded by Boswell, or Warburton<sup>1</sup> by Hurd. It was not

<sup>1</sup> [Bishop of Gloucester, 1759, an intimate friend of Pope, and himself



in the power of adulation to turn such a head, or deprave such a heart, as Addison's. But it must in candour be admitted that he contracted some of the faults which can scarcely be avoided by any person who is so unfortunate as to be the oracle of a small literary coterie.

One member of this little society was Eustace Budgell, a young Templar of some literature, and a distant relation of Addison. There was at this time no stain on the character of Budgell, and it is not improbable that his career would have been prosperous and honourable, if the life of his cousin had been prolonged. But, when the master was laid in the grave, the disciple broke loose from all restraint, descended rapidly from one degree of vice and misery to another, ruined his fortune by follies, attempted to repair it by crimes, and at length closed a wicked and unhappy life by self-murder. Yet, to the last, the wretched man, gambler, lampooner, cheat, forger, as he was, retained his affection and veneration for Addison, and recorded those feelings in the last lines which he traced before he hid himself from infamy under London Bridge.

Another of Addison's favourite companions was Ambrose Philips, a good Whig and a middling poet, who had the honour of bringing into fashion a species of composition which has been called, after his name, Namby Pamby. But the most remarkable members of the little senate, as Pope long afterwards called it, were Richard Steele and Thomas Tickell.

Steele had known Addison from childhood. They had been together at the Charter House and at Oxford; but circumstances had then, for a time, separated them widely. Steele had left college without taking a degree, had been disinherited by a rich relation, had led a vagrant life, had served in the army, had tried to find the philosopher's stone, and had written a religious treatise and several comedies. He was one of those people whom it is impossible either to hate or to respect. His temper was sweet, his affections warm, his spirits lively, his passions strong, and his principles weak. His life was spent in sinning and

a most prolific writer, and the editor of *Shakespeare*. His works were edited and his life was written by his friend and admirer, Richard Hurd, Bishop of Worcester.]



repenting ; in inculcating what was right, and doing what was wrong. In speculation, he was a man of piety and honour ; in practice he was much of the rake and a little of the swindler. He was, however, so good-natured that it was not easy to be seriously angry with him, and that even rigid moralists felt more inclined to pity than to blame him, when he dived himself into a spunging-house or drank himself into a fever. Addison regarded Steele with kindness not unmingled with scorn, tried, with little success, to keep him out of scrapes, introduced him to the great, procured a good place for him, corrected his plays, and, though by no means rich, lent him large sums of money. One of these loans appears, from a letter dated in August 1708, to have amounted to a thousand pounds. These pecuniary transactions probably led to frequent bickerings. It is said that, on one occasion, Steele's negligence, or dishonesty, provoked Addison to repay himself by the help of a bailiff. We cannot join with Miss Aikin in rejecting this story. Johnson heard it from Savage<sup>1</sup>, who heard it from Steele. Few private transactions which took place a hundred and twenty years ago, are proved by stronger evidence than this. But we can by no means agree with those who condemn Addison's severity. The most amiable of mankind may well be moved to indignation, when what he has earned hardly, and lent with great inconvenience to himself, for the purpose of relieving a friend in distress, is squandered with insane profusion. We will illustrate our meaning by an example, which is not the less striking because it is taken from fiction. Dr. Harrison, in Fielding's *Amelia*, is represented as the most benevolent of human beings ; yet he takes in execution, not only the goods, but the person of his friend Booth. Dr. Harrison resorts to this strong measure because he has been informed that Booth, while pleading poverty as an excuse for not paying just debts, has been buying fine jewellery, and setting up a coach. No person who is well acquainted with Steele's life and correspondence can doubt that he behaved quite as ill to Addison as Booth was accused of behaving to Dr. Harrison. The real history, we have little doubt, was something like this :—A letter comes to

<sup>1</sup> [One of the poets included in Johnson's *Lives*.]



Addison, imploring help in pathetic terms, and promising reformation and speedy repayment. Poor Dick declares that he has not an inch of candle, or a bushel of coals, or credit with the butcher for a shoulder of mutton. Addison is moved. He determines to deny himself some medals which are wanting to his series of the Twelve Caesars; to put off buying the new edition of *Bayle's Dictionary*<sup>1</sup>; and to wear his old sword and buckles another year. In this way he manages to send a hundred pounds to his friend. The next day he calls on Steele, and finds scores of gentlemen and ladies assembled. The fiddles are playing. The table is groaning under Champagne, Burgundy, and pyramids of sweetmeats. Is it strange that a man whose kindness is thus abused, should send sheriff's officers to reclaim what is due to him?

Tickell was a young man, fresh from Oxford, who had introduced himself to public notice by writing a most ingenious and graceful little poem in praise of the opera of *Rosamond*. He deserved, and at length attained, the first place in Addison's friendship. For a time Steele and Tickell were on good terms. But they loved Addison too much to love each other, and at length became as bitter enemies as the rival bulls in Virgil.

At the close of 1708 Wharton became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and appointed Addison Chief Secretary. Addison was consequently under the necessity of quitting London for Dublin. Besides the chief secretaryship, which was then worth about two thousand pounds a year, he obtained a patent appointing him keeper of the Irish Records for life, with a salary of three or four hundred a year. Budgell accompanied his cousin in the capacity of private Secretary.

Wharton and Addison had nothing in common but Whiggism. The Lord Lieutenant was not only licentious and corrupt, but was distinguished from other libertines and jobbers by a callous impudence which presented the strongest contrast to the Secretary's gentleness and delicacy. Many parts of the Irish administration at this time appear to have deserved serious blame. But against Addison there was not a murmur. He long afterwards asserted,

<sup>1</sup> [A critical and historical encyclopaedia published at Rotterdam in 1696.]



what all the evidence which we have ever seen tends to prove, that his diligence and integrity gained the friendship of all the most considerable persons in Ireland.

The parliamentary career of Addison in Ireland has, we think, wholly escaped the notice of all his biographers. He was elected member for the borough of Cavan in the summer of 1709; and in the journals of two sessions his name frequently occurs. Some of the entries appear to indicate that he so far overcame his timidity as to make speeches. Nor is this by any means improbable; for the Irish House of Commons was a far less formidable audience than the English House; and many tongues which were tied by fear in the greater assembly became fluent in the smaller. Gerard Hamilton<sup>1</sup>, for example, who, from fear of losing the fame gained by his single speech, sat mute at Westminster during forty years, spoke with great effect at Dublin when he was Secretary to Lord Halifax.

While Addison was in Ireland, an event occurred to which he owes his high and permanent rank among British writers. As yet his fame rested on performances which, though highly respectable, were not built for duration, and which would, if he had produced nothing else, have now been almost forgotten, on some excellent Latin verses, on some English verses which occasionally rose above mediocrity, and on a book of travels, agreeably written, but not indicating any extraordinary powers of mind. These works showed him to be a man of taste, sense, and learning. The time had come when he was to prove himself a man of genius, and to enrich our literature with compositions which will live as long as the English language.

In the spring of 1709, Steele formed a literary project, of which he was far indeed from foreseeing the consequences. Periodical papers had during many years been published in London. Most of these were political; but in some of them questions of morality, taste, and love casuistry had been discussed. The literary merit of these works was small indeed; and even their names are now known only to the curious.

<sup>1</sup> [Member for Petersfield, 1754; known as 'Single-speech Hamilton' from his one brilliant speech in the great debate on the Address in 1755.]



Steele had been appointed Gazetteer by Sunderland, at the request, it is said, of Addison, and thus had access to foreign intelligence earlier and more authentic than was in those times within the reach of an ordinary news-writer. This circumstance seems to have suggested to him the scheme of publishing a periodical paper on a new plan. It was to appear on the days on which the post left London for the country, which were, in that generation, the Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. It was to contain the foreign news, accounts of theatrical representations, and the literary gossip of Will's<sup>1</sup> and of the Grecian<sup>1</sup>. It was also to contain remarks on the fashionable topics of the day, compliments to beauties, pasquinades on noted sharpers, and criticisms on popular preachers. The aim of Steele does not appear to have been at first higher than this. He was not ill qualified to conduct the work which he had planned. His public intelligence he drew from the best sources. He knew the town, and had paid dear for his knowledge. He had read much more than the dissipated men of that time were in the habit of reading. He was a rake among scholars, and a scholar among rakes. His style was easy and not incorrect; and, though his wit and humour were of no high order, his gay animal spirits imparted to his compositions an air of vivacity which ordinary readers could hardly distinguish from comic genius. His writings have been well compared to those light wines which, though deficient in body and flavour, are yet a pleasant small drink, if not kept too long, or carried too far.

Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, Astrologer, was an imaginary person, almost as well known in that age as Mr. Paul Pry or Mr. Samuel Pickwick in ours. Swift had assumed the name of Bickerstaff in a satirical pamphlet against Partridge, the maker of almanacks. Partridge had been fool enough to publish a furious reply. Bickerstaff had rejoined

<sup>1</sup> ['All accounts of gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment, shall be under the article of White's Chocolate-house; poetry, under that of Will's Coffee-House; learning under the title of the Grecian; foreign and domestic news you will have from St. James's Coffee-house.'—*Tatler*, No. 1. Will's Coffee-house had been frequented by Dryden, as Button's was by Addison.]



in a second pamphlet still more diverting than the first. All the wits had combined to keep up the joke, and the town was long in convulsions of laughter. Steele determined to employ the name which this controversy had made popular; and, in 1709, it was announced that Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, Astrologer, was about to publish a paper called the *Tatler*.

Addison had not been consulted about this scheme: but as soon as he heard of it, he determined to give his assistance. The effect of that assistance cannot be better described than in Steele's own words. 'I fared,' he said, 'like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid. I was undone by my auxiliary. When I had once called him in, I could not subsist without dependence on him.' 'The paper,' he says elsewhere, 'was advanced indeed. It was raised to a greater thing than I intended it.'

It is probable that Addison, when he sent across St. George's Channel his first contributions to the *Tatler*, had no notion of the extent and variety of his own powers. He was the possessor of a vast mine, rich with a hundred ores. But he had been acquainted only with the least precious part of his treasures, and had hitherto contented himself with producing sometimes copper and sometimes lead, intermingled with a little silver. All at once, and by mere accident, he had lighted on an inexhaustible vein of the finest gold.

The mere choice and arrangement of his words would have sufficed to make his essays classical. For never, not even by Dryden, not even by Temple<sup>1</sup>, had the English language been written with such sweetness, grace, and facility. But this was the smallest part of Addison's praise. Had he clothed his thoughts in the half French style of Horace Walpole<sup>2</sup>, or in the half Latin style of Dr. Johnson, or in the half German jargon of the present day, his genius would have triumphed over all faults of manner. As a moral satirist he stands unrivalled. If ever the best *Tatlers* and *Spectators* were equalled in their

<sup>1</sup> [Sir William Temple, famous as an essayist. He was the early patron of Swift.]

<sup>2</sup> [Son of Sir Robert Walpole; noted as a patron of literature, and himself a letter-writer and novelist.]



own kind, we should be inclined to guess that it must have been by the lost comedies of Menander.<sup>1</sup>

In wit, properly so called, Addison was not inferior to Cowley<sup>2</sup> or Butler<sup>3</sup>. No single ode of Cowley contains so many happy analogies as are crowded into the lines to Sir Godfrey Kneller<sup>4</sup>; and we would undertake to collect from the *Spectators* as great a number of ingenious illustrations as can be found in *Hudibras*. The still higher faculty of invention Addison possessed in still larger measure. The numerous fictions, generally original, often wild and grotesque, but always singularly graceful and happy, which are found in his essays, fully entitle him to the rank of a great poet, a rank to which his metrical compositions give him no claim. As an observer of life, of manners, of all the shades of human character, he stands in the first class. And what he observed he had the art of communicating in two widely different ways. He could describe virtues, vices, habits, whims, as well as Clarendon<sup>5</sup>. But he could do something better. He could call human beings into existence, and make them exhibit themselves. If we wish to find anything more vivid than Addison's best portraits, we must go either to Shakespeare or to Cervantes<sup>6</sup>.

But what shall we say of Addison's humour, of his sense of the ludicrous, of his power of awakening that sense in others, and of drawing mirth from incidents which occur every day, and from little peculiarities of temper and manner, such as may be found in every man? We feel the charm: we give ourselves up to it: but we strive in vain to analyse it.

✓ Perhaps the best way of describing Addison's peculiar pleasantry is to compare it with the pleasantry of some other great satirists. The three most eminent masters

<sup>1</sup> [The greatest of later Greek comedy writers. Only fragments of his plays exist, but he was imitated, and to a certain extent translated, by the Latin poet Terence.]

<sup>2</sup> [1618-1667. Famous for his wit and ingenuity.]

<sup>3</sup> [Author of *Hudibras*, the first witty, satirical poem of any length in English. It is an attack on the Puritans, and was extremely popular in the later seventeenth century.]

<sup>4</sup> [The painter.]

<sup>5</sup> [Author of the *History of the Rebellion*, 1608-1674.]

<sup>6</sup> [1547-1616. Author of *Don Quixote*.]

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to describe  
as  
satirists



of the art of ridicule, during the eighteenth century, were, we conceive, Addison, Swift, and Voltaire. Which of the three had the greatest power of moving laughter may be questioned. But each of them, within his own domain, was supreme.

Voltaire is the prince of buffoons. His merriment is without disguise or restraint. He gambols ; he grins ; he shakes his sides ; he points the finger ; he turns up the nose ; he shoots out the tongue. The manner of Swift is the very opposite to this. He moves laughter, but never joins in it. He appears in his works such as he appeared in society. All the company are convulsed with merriment, while the Dean, the author of all the mirth, preserves an invincible gravity, and even sourness of aspect, and gives utterance to the most eccentric and ludicrous fancies, with the air of a man reading the commination service.

The manner of Addison is as remote from that of Swift as from that of Voltaire. He neither laughs out like the French wit, nor, like the Irish wit, throws a double portion of severity into his countenance while laughing inwardly ; but preserves a look peculiarly his own, a look of demure serenity, disturbed only by an arch sparkle of the eye, an almost imperceptible elevation of the brow, an almost imperceptible curl of the lip. His tone is never that either of a Jack Pudding or of a Cynic. It is that of a gentleman, in whom the quickest sense of the ridiculous is constantly tempered by good nature and good breeding.

We own that the humour of Addison is, in our opinion, of a more delicious flavour than the humour of either Swift or Voltaire. Thus much, at least, is certain, that both Swift and Voltaire have been successfully mimicked, and that no man has yet been able to mimic Addison. The letter of the Abbé Coyer to Pansophe<sup>1</sup> is Voltaire all over, and imposed, during a long time, on the Academicians of Paris. There are passages in Arbuthnot's<sup>2</sup> satirical works which we, at least, cannot distinguish from Swift's best

<sup>1</sup> [Abbé Coyer (1707-1782), was tutor to the Prince of Turenne, and author of several amusing works, of which the *Letter to Pansophe* was one of the best known.]

<sup>2</sup> [The creator of 'John Bull' ; one of the intimate friends of Pope and Swift.]



plished, be it remembered, without writing one personal lampoon.

In the early contributions of Addison to the *Tatler* his peculiar powers were not fully exhibited. Yet from the first, his superiority to all his coadjutors was evident. Some of his later *Tatlers* are fully equal to anything that he ever wrote. Among the portraits we must admire Tom Folio<sup>1</sup>, Ned Softly<sup>2</sup>, and the Political Upholsterer<sup>3</sup>. The proceedings of the Court of Honour<sup>4</sup>, the Thermometer of Zeal<sup>5</sup>, the story of the Frozen Words<sup>6</sup>, the Memoirs of the Shilling<sup>7</sup>, are excellent specimens of that ingenious and lively species of fiction in which Addison excelled all men. There is one still better paper of the same class. But though that paper, a hundred and thirty-three years ago, was probably thought as edifying as one of Smalridge's<sup>8</sup> sermons, we dare not indicate it to the squeamish readers of the nineteenth century.

During the session of Parliament which commenced in November 1709, and which the impeachment of Sacheverell has made memorable, Addison appears to have resided in London. The *Tatler* was now more popular than any periodical paper had ever been; and his connexion with it was generally known. It was not known, however, that almost everything good in the *Tatler* was his. The truth is, that the fifty or sixty numbers which we owe to him were not merely the best, but so decidedly the best that any five of them are more valuable than all the two hundred numbers in which he had no share.

He required, at this time, all the solace which he could derive from literary success. The Queen had always disliked the Whigs. She had during some years disliked the Marlborough family. But, reigning by a disputed title, she could not venture directly to oppose herself to a majority of both Houses of Parliament; and, engaged as she was in a war on the event of which her own Crown was staked,

<sup>1</sup> [*Tatler*, Nos. 158, 160.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Tatler*, No. 155.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Tatler*, No. 220.]

<sup>4</sup> [*Tatler*, No. 254. By Addison and Steele.]

<sup>5</sup> [*Spectator*, No. 249.]

<sup>6</sup> [Bishop of Bristol, 1714-1719. Cf. *Tatler*, No. 260.]

<sup>7</sup> [*Tatler*, No. 163.]

<sup>8</sup> [*Spectator*, No. 250.]



she could not venture to disgrace a great and successful general. But at length, in the year 1710, the causes which had restrained her from showing her aversion to the Low Church party ceased to operate. The trial of Sacheverell produced an outbreak of public feeling scarcely less violent than the outbreaks which we can ourselves remember in 1820, and in 1831. The country gentlemen, the country clergymen, the rabble of the towns, were all, for once, on the same side. It was clear that, if a general election took place before the excitement abated, the Tories would have a majority. The services of Marlborough had been so splendid that they were no longer necessary. The Queen's throne was secure from all attack on the part of Lewis. Indeed, it seemed much more likely that the English and German armies would divide the spoils of Versailles and Marli than that a Marshal of France would bring back the Pretender to St. James's. The Queen, acting by the advice of Harley, determined to dismiss her servants. In June the change commenced. Sunderland was the first who fell. The Tories exulted over his fall. The Whigs tried, during a few weeks, to persuade themselves that her Majesty had acted only from personal dislike to the Secretary, and that she meditated no further alteration. But, early in August, Godolphin was surprised by a letter from Anne, which directed him to break his white staff. Even after this event, the irresolution or dissimulation of Harley kept up the hopes of the Whigs during another month; and then the ruin became rapid and violent. The Parliament was dissolved. The Ministers were turned out. The Tories were called to office. The tide of popularity ran violently in favour of the High Church party. That party, feeble in the late House of Commons, was now irresistible. The power which the Tories had thus suddenly acquired, they used with blind and stupid ferocity. The howl which the whole pack set up for prey and for blood appalled even him who had roused and unchained them. When, at this distance of time, we calmly review the conduct of the discarded ministers, we cannot but feel a movement of indignation at the injustice with which they were treated. No body of men had ever administered the government with more energy, ability, and moderation; and their



success had been proportioned to their wisdom. They had saved Holland and Germany. They had humbled France. They had, as it seemed, all but torn Spain from the House of Bourbon. They had made England the first power in Europe. At home they had united England and Scotland. They had respected the rights of conscience and the liberty of the subject. They retired, leaving their country at the height of prosperity and glory. And yet they were pursued to their retreat by such a roar of obloquy as was never raised against the government which threw away thirteen colonies, or against the government which sent a gallant army to perish in the ditches of Walcheren<sup>1</sup>.

None of the Whigs suffered more in the general wreck than Addison. He had just sustained some heavy pecuniary losses, of the nature of which we are imperfectly informed, when his Secretaryship was taken from him. He had reason to believe that he should also be deprived of the small Irish office which he held by patent. He had just resigned his Fellowship. It seems probable that he had already ventured to raise his eyes to a great lady, and that, while his political friends were in power, and while his own fortunes were rising, he had been, in the phrase of the romances which were then fashionable, permitted to hope. But Mr. Addison the ingenious writer, and Mr. Addison the chief Secretary, were, in her ladyship's opinion, two very different persons. All these calamities united, however, could not disturb the serene cheerfulness of a mind conscious of innocence, and rich in its own wealth. He told his friends, with smiling resignation, that they ought to admire his philosophy, that he had lost at once his fortune, his place, his Fellowship, and his mistress, that he must think of turning tutor again, and yet that his spirits were as good as ever.

He had one consolation. Of the unpopularity which his friends had incurred, he had no share. Such was the esteem with which he was regarded that, while the most violent measures were taken for the purpose of forcing

<sup>1</sup> [In 1809 the English landed on the island of Walcheren (off the coast of Flanders), and captured Middleburg. The advantage was not pressed, and numbers of the soldiers died miserably of cold and wet. Eventually the island was abandoned.]



Tory members on Whig corporations, he was returned to Parliament without even a contest. Swift, who was now in London, and who had already determined on quitting the Whigs, wrote to Stella in these remarkable words: 'The Tories carry it among the new members six to one. Mr. Addison's election has passed easy and undisputed; and I believe if he had a mind to be king he would hardly be refused.'

The good will with which the Tories regarded Addison is the more honourable to him, because it had not been purchased by any concession on his part. During the general election he published a political Journal, entitled the *Whig Examiner*. Of that Journal it may be sufficient to say that Johnson, in spite of his strong political prejudices, pronounced it to be superior in wit to any of Swift's writings on the other side. When it ceased to appear, Swift, in a letter to Stella, expressed his exultation at the death of so formidable an antagonist. 'He might well rejoice,' says Johnson, 'at the death of that which he could not have killed.' 'On no occasion,' he adds, 'was the genius of Addison more vigorously exerted, and on none did the superiority of his powers more evidently appear.'

The only use which Addison appears to have made of the favour with which he was regarded by the Tories was to save some of his friends from the general ruin of the Whig party. He felt himself to be in a situation which made it his duty to take a decided part in politics. But the case of Steele and of Ambrose Philips was different. For Philips, Addison even condescended to solicit, with what success we have not ascertained. Steele held two places. He was Gazetteer, and he was also a Commissioner of Stamps. The Gazette was taken from him. But he was suffered to retain his place in the Stamp Office, on an implied understanding that he should not be active against the new government; and he was, during more than two years, induced by Addison to observe this armistice with tolerable fidelity.

Isaac Bickerstaff accordingly became silent upon politics, and the article of news which had once formed about one-third of his paper, altogether disappeared. The *Tatler* had completely changed its character. It was now nothing



we possess. As it is, he is entitled to be considered, not only as the greatest of the English essayists, but as the forerunner of the great English novelists.

We say this of Addison alone ; for Addison is the Spectator. About three-sevenths of the work are his ; and it is no exaggeration to say, that his worst essay is as good as the best essay of any of his coadjutors.<sup>1</sup> His best essays approach near to absolute perfection ; nor is their excellence more wonderful than their variety. His invention never seems to flag ; nor is he ever under the necessity of repeating himself, or of wearing out a subject. There are no dregs in his wine. He regales us after the fashion of that prodigal nabob who held that there was only one good glass in a bottle. As soon as we have tasted the first sparkling foam of a jest, it is withdrawn, and a fresh draught of nectar is at our lips. On the Monday we have an allegory as lively and ingenious as Lucian's *Auction of Lives*<sup>1</sup> ; on the Tuesday an Eastern apologue, as richly coloured as the *Tales of Scherezade*<sup>2</sup> ; on the Wednesday, a character described with the skill of La Bruyere<sup>3</sup> ; on the Thursday, a scene from common life, equal to the best chapters in the *Vicar of Wakefield*<sup>4</sup> ; on the Friday, some sly Horatian pleasantry on fashionable follies, on hoops, patches, or puppet-shows ; and on the Saturday a religious meditation, which will bear a comparison with the finest passages in Massillon<sup>5</sup>.

It is dangerous to select where there is so much that deserves the highest praise. We will venture, however, to say, that any person who wishes to form a notion of the extent and variety of Addison's powers, will do well to read at one sitting the following papers, the two Visits to the Abbey, the Visit to the Exchange, the Journal of the Retired Citizen, the Vision of Mirza, the Transmigrations of Pug the Monkey, and the Death of Sir Roger de Coverley.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [A prose satire by Lucian, a Greek writer of the second century, A.D.]

<sup>2</sup> [The story-teller of the *Arabian Nights*.]

<sup>3</sup> [1646-1696. Author of *Characters of Theophrastus translated from the Greek, with the Manners of the present Age*.] <sup>4</sup> [Goldsmith's novel.]

<sup>5</sup> [A celebrated French preacher of the time of Louis XIV.]

<sup>6</sup> Nos. 26, 329, 69, 317, 159, 343, 517. These papers are all in the first seven volumes. The eighth must be considered as a separate work. (Macaulay.)



The least valuable of Addison's contributions to the *Spectator* are, in the judgement of our age, his critical papers. Yet his critical papers are always luminous, and often ingenious. The very worst of them must be regarded as creditable to him, when the character of the school in which he had been trained is fairly considered. The best of them were much too good for his readers. In truth, he was not so far behind our generation as he was before his own. No essays in the *Spectator* were more censured and derided than those in which he raised his voice against the contempt with which our fine old ballads were regarded, and showed the scoffers that the same gold which, burnished and polished, gives lustre to the *Æneid* and the *Odes of Horace*, is mingled with the rude dross of *Chevy Chase*.<sup>1</sup>

It is not strange that the success of the *Spectator* should have been such as no similar work has ever obtained. The number of copies daily distributed was at first three thousand. It subsequently increased, and had risen to near four thousand when the stamp tax was imposed. That tax was fatal to a crowd of journals. The *Spectator*, however, stood its ground, doubled its price, and, though its circulation fell off, still yielded a large revenue both to the state and to the authors. For particular papers, the demand was immense; of some, it is said, twenty thousand copies were required. But this was not all. To have the *Spectator* served up every morning with the bohea and rolls was a luxury for the few. The majority were content to wait till essays enough had appeared to form a volume. Ten thousand copies of each volume were immediately taken off, and new editions were called for. It must be remembered, that the population of England was then hardly a third of what it now is. The number of Englishmen who were in the habit of reading, was probably not a sixth of what it now is. A shopkeeper or a farmer who found any pleasure in literature, was a rarity. Nay, there was doubtless more than one knight of the shire whose country seat did not contain ten books, receipt books and books on farriery included. In these circumstances, the sale of the

<sup>1</sup> [*Spectator*, Nos. 70, 74.]

*Reverend*



*Spectator* must be considered as indicating a popularity quite as great as that of the most successful works of Sir Walter Scott and Mr. Dickens in our own time.

At the close of 1712 the *Spectator* ceased to appear. It was probably felt that the shortfaced gentleman and his club had been long enough before the town; and that it was time to withdraw them, and to replace them by a new set of characters. In a few weeks the first number of the *Guardian* was published. But the *Guardian* was unfortunate both in its birth and in its death. It began in dulness, and disappeared in a tempest of faction. The original plan was bad. Addison contributed nothing till sixty-six numbers had appeared; and it was then impossible to make the *Guardian* what the *Spectator* had been. Nestor Ironside and the Miss Lizards were people to whom even he could impart no interest. He could only furnish some excellent little essays, both serious and comic; and this he did.

Why Addison gave no assistance to the *Guardian*, during the first two months of its existence, is a question which has puzzled the editors and biographers, but which seems to us to admit of a very easy solution. He was then engaged in bringing his *Cato* on the stage.

The first four acts of this drama had been lying in his desk since his return from Italy. His modest and sensitive nature shrank from the risk of a public and shameful failure; and, though all who saw the manuscript were loud in praise, some thought it possible that an audience might become impatient even of very good rhetoric, and advised Addison to print the play without hazarding a representation. At length, after many fits of apprehension, the poet yielded to the urgency of his political friends, who hoped that the public would discover some analogy between the followers of Caesar and the Tories, between Sempronius and the apostate Whigs, between Cato, struggling to the last for the liberties of Rome, and the band of patriots who still stood firm round Halifax and Wharton.

Addison gave the play to the managers of Drury Lane theatre, without stipulating for any advantage to himself. They, therefore, thought themselves bound to spare no cost in scenery and dresses. The decorations, it is true,



would not have pleased the skilful eye of Mr. Macready<sup>1</sup>. Juba's waistcoat blazed with gold lace; Marcia's hoop was worthy of a Duchess on the birthday; and Cato wore a wig worth fifty guineas. The prologue was written by Pope, and is undoubtedly a dignified and spirited composition. The part of the hero was excellently played by Booth. Steele undertook to pack a house. The boxes were in a blaze with the stars of the Peers in Opposition. The pit was crowded with attentive and friendly listeners from the Inns of Court and the literary coffee-houses. Sir Gilbert Heathcote, Governor of the Bank of England, was at the head of a powerful body of auxiliaries from the city, warm men and true Whigs, but better known at Jonathan's and Garraway's<sup>2</sup> than in the haunts of wits and critics.

These precautions were quite superfluous. The Tories, as a body, regarded Addison with no unkind feelings. Nor was it for their interest, professing, as they did, profound reverence for law and prescription, and abhorrence both of popular insurrections and of standing armies, to appropriate to themselves reflections thrown on the great military chief and demagogue, who, with the support of the legions and of the common people, subverted all the ancient institutions of his country. Accordingly, every shout that was raised by the members of the Kit Cat was echoed by the High Churchmen of the October; and the curtain at length fell amidst thunders of unanimous applause.

The delight and admiration of the town were described by the *Guardian* in terms which we might attribute to partiality, were it not that the *Examiner*, the organ of the Ministry, held similar language. The Tories, indeed, found much to sneer at in the conduct of their opponents. Steele had on this, as on other occasions, shown more zeal than taste or judgement. The honest citizens who marched under the orders of Sir Gibby, as he was facetiously called, probably knew better when to buy and when to sell stock than when to clap and when to hiss at a play, and incurred some ridicule by making the hypocritical Sempronius their

<sup>1</sup> [A famous actor and stage-manager in the first half of the nineteenth century.]

<sup>2</sup> [Jonathan's Coffee-house was the chief resort of the stock-jobbers, and Garraway's of merchants.]



favourite, and by giving to his insincere rants louder plaudits than they bestowed on the temperate eloquence of Cato. Wharton, too, who had the incredible effrontery to applaud the lines about flying from prosperous vice and from the power of impious men to a private station, did not escape the sarcasms of those who justly thought that he could fly from nothing more vicious or impious than himself. The epilogue, which was written by Garth<sup>1</sup>, a zealous Whig, was severely and not unreasonably censured as ignoble and out of place. But Addison was described, even by the bitterest Tory writers, as a gentleman of wit and virtue, in whose friendship many persons of both parties were happy, and whose name ought not to be mixed up with factious squabbles.

Of the jests by which the triumph of the Whig party was disturbed, the most severe and happy was Bolingbroke's. Between two acts, he sent for Booth to his box, and presented him, before the whole theatre, with a purse of fifty guineas for defending the cause of liberty so well against a perpetual Dictator. This was a pungent allusion to the attempt which Marlborough had made, not long before his fall, to obtain a patent creating him Captain General for life.

It was April; and in April, a hundred and thirty years ago, the London season was thought to be far advanced. During a whole month, however, *Cato* was performed to overflowing houses, and brought into the treasury of the theatre twice the gains of an ordinary spring. In the summer the Drury Lane company went down to the Act at Oxford, and there, before an audience which retained an affectionate remembrance of Addison's accomplishments and virtues, his tragedy was acted during several days. The gownsmen began to besiege the theatre in the forenoon, and by one in the afternoon all the seats were filled.

About the merits of the piece which had so extraordinary an effect, the public, we suppose, has made up its mind. To compare it with the masterpieces of the Attic stage, with the great English dramas of the time of Elizabeth, or even with the productions of Schiller's manhood<sup>2</sup>, would be absurd indeed. Yet it contains excellent dialogue and

<sup>1</sup> [Physician to George I, and member of the Kit Cat Club.]

<sup>2</sup> [1759-1805. *Wallenstein* was written in 1799, and *Tell* in 1803.]



declamation, and among plays fashioned on the French model, must be allowed to rank high; not indeed with *Athalie*<sup>1</sup>, or *Saul*<sup>2</sup>; but, we think, not below *Cinna*<sup>3</sup>, and certainly above any other English tragedy of the same school, above many of the plays of Corneille, above many of the plays of Voltaire and Alfieri<sup>4</sup>, and above some plays of Racine. Be this as it may, we have little doubt that *Cato* did as much as the *Tatlers*, *Spectators*, and *Freeholders* united, to raise Addison's fame among his contemporaries.

The modesty and good nature of the successful dramatist had tamed even the malignity of faction. But literary envy, it should seem, is a fiercer passion than party spirit. It was by a zealous Whig that the fiercest attack on the Whig tragedy was made. John Dennis<sup>5</sup> published *Remarks on Cato*, which were written with some acuteness and with much coarseness and asperity. Addison neither defended himself nor retaliated. On many points he had an excellent defence; and nothing would have been easier than to retaliate; for Dennis had written bad odes, bad tragedies, bad comedies: he had, moreover, a larger share than most men of those infirmities and eccentricities which excite laughter; and Addison's power of turning either an absurd book or an absurd man into ridicule was unrivalled. Addison, however, serenely conscious of his superiority, looked with pity on his assailant, whose temper, naturally irritable and gloomy, had been soured by want, by controversy, and by literary failures.

But among the young candidates for Addison's favour there was one distinguished by talents from the rest, and distinguished, we fear, not less by malignity and insincerity. Pope was only twenty-five. But his powers had expanded to their full maturity; and his best poem, the *Rape of the Lock*, had recently been published. Of his genius, Addison had always expressed high admiration. But Addison had early discerned, what might indeed have been discerned by an eye less penetrating than his, that the

<sup>1</sup> [By Racine.]

<sup>2</sup> [By Alfieri.]

<sup>3</sup> [By Corneille.]

<sup>4</sup> [A noted Italian dramatist of the eighteenth century.]

<sup>5</sup> [A truculent critic of the reign of Queen Anne. His criticism of *Cato* is quoted by Dr. Johnson in his *Life of Addison*.]



diminutive, crooked, sickly boy was eager to revenge himself on society for the unkindness of nature. In the *Spectator*, the *Essay on Criticism* had been praised with cordial warmth; but a gentle hint had been added, that the writer of so excellent a poem would have done well to avoid ill-natured personalities. Pope, though evidently more galled by the censure than gratified by the praise, returned thanks for the admonition, and promised to profit by it. The two writers continued to exchange civilities, counsel, and small good offices. Addison publicly extolled Pope's miscellaneous pieces; and Pope furnished Addison with a prologue. This did not last long. Pope hated Dennis, whom he had injured without provocation. The appearance of the *Remarks on Cato* gave the irritable poet an opportunity of venting his malice under the show of friendship; and such an opportunity could not but be welcome to a nature which was implacable in enmity, and which always preferred the tortuous to the straight path. He published, accordingly, the *Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis*. But Pope had mistaken his powers. He was a great master of invective and sarcasm: he could dissect a character in terse and sonorous couplets, brilliant with antithesis: but of dramatic talent he was altogether destitute. If he had written a lampoon on Dennis, such as that on Atticus<sup>1</sup>, or that on

<sup>1</sup> [Addison :

... Were there one whose fires  
True Genius kindles, and fair Fame inspires;  
Blest with each talent and each art to please,  
And born to write, converse, and live with ease:  
Should such a man, too fond to live alone,  
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,  
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,  
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;  
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,  
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;  
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,  
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;  
Alike reserv'd to blame or to commend,  
A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend;  
Dreading ev'n fools, by Flatterers besieg'd,  
And so obliging that he ne'er oblig'd;  
Like Cato give his little Senate laws,  
And sit attentive to his own applause,



Sporus<sup>1</sup>, the old grumbler would have been crushed. But Pope writing dialogue resembled—to borrow Horace's imagery and his own—a wolf, which, instead of biting, should take to kicking, or a monkey which should try to sting. The *Narrative* is utterly contemptible. Of argument there is not even the show; and the jests are such as, if they were introduced into a farce, would call forth the hisses of the shilling gallery. Dennis raves about the drama; and the nurse thinks that he is calling for a dram. 'There is,' he cries, 'no peripetia in the tragedy, no change of fortune, no change at all.' 'Pray, good sir, be not angry,' says the old woman; 'I'll fetch change.' This is not exactly the pleasantry of Addison.

There can be no doubt that Addison saw through this officious zeal, and felt himself deeply aggrieved by it. So foolish and spiteful a pamphlet could do him no good, and, if he were thought to have any hand in it, must do him harm. Gifted with incomparable powers of ridicule, he had never, even in self-defence, used those powers inhumanly or uncourteously; and he was not disposed to let others make his fame and his interests a pretext under which they might commit outrages from which he had himself constantly abstained. He accordingly declared that he had no concern in the *Narrative*, that he disapproved of it, and that if he answered the *Remarks*, he would answer them like a gentleman; and he took care to communicate this to Dennis. Pope was bitterly mortified; and to this transaction we are inclined to ascribe the hatred with which he ever after regarded Addison.

In September 1713 the *Guardian* ceased to appear. Steele had gone mad about politics. A general election

While Wits and Templers ev'ry sentence raise  
And wonder with a foolish face of praise:  
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?  
Who would not weep if Atticus were he?

*Epistle to Arbuthnot.]*

\* i [Lord Hervey:

. . . That thing of silk,  
Sporus, that mere white curd of Ass's milk.  
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?  
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?

*Epistle to Arbuthnot.]*



had just taken place: he had been chosen member for Stockbridge; and he fully expected to play a first part in Parliament. The immense success of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* had turned his head. He had been the editor of both those papers, and was not aware how entirely they owed their influence and popularity to the genius of his friend. His spirits, always violent, were now excited by vanity, ambition, and faction, to such a pitch that he every day committed some offence against good sense and good taste. All the discreet and moderate members of his own party regretted and condemned his folly. 'I am in a thousand troubles,' Addison wrote, 'about poor Dick, and wish that his zeal for the public may not be ruinous to himself. But he has sent me word that he is determined to go on, and that any advice I may give him in this particular will have no weight with him.'

Steele set up a political paper called the *Englishman*, which, as it was not supported by contributions from Addison, completely failed. By this work, by some other writings of the same kind, and by the airs which he gave himself at the first meeting of the new Parliament, he made the Tories so angry that they determined to expel him. The Whigs stood by him gallantly, but were unable to save him. The vote of expulsion was regarded by all dispassionate men as a tyrannical exercise of the power of the majority. But Steele's violence and folly, though they by no means justified the steps which his enemies took, had completely disgusted his friends; nor did he ever regain the place which he had held in the public estimation.

Addison about this time conceived the design of adding an eighth volume to the *Spectator*. In June 1714 the first number of the new series appeared, and during about six months three papers were published weekly. Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between the *Englishman* and the eighth volume of the *Spectator*, between Steele without Addison and Addison without Steele. The *Englishman* is forgotten; the eighth volume of the *Spectator* contains, perhaps, the finest essays, both serious and playful, in the English language.

Before this volume was completed, the death of Anne produced an entire change in the administration of public



affairs. The blow fell suddenly. It found the Tory party distracted by internal feuds, and unprepared for any great effort. Harley had just been disgraced. Bolingbroke, it was supposed, would be the chief minister. But the Queen was on her death-bed before the white staff had been given, and her last public act was to deliver it with a feeble hand to the Duke of Shrewsbury. The emergency produced a coalition between all sections of public men who were attached to the Protestant succession. George the First was proclaimed without opposition. A Council, in which the leading Whigs had seats, took the direction of affairs till the new King should arrive. The first act of the Lords Justices was to appoint Addison their secretary.

There is an idle tradition that he was directed to prepare a letter to the King, that he could not satisfy himself as to the style of this composition, and that the Lords Justices called in a clerk who at once did what was wanted. It is not strange that a story so flattering to mediocrity should be popular; and we are sorry to deprive dunces of their consolation. But the truth must be told. It was well observed by Sir James Mackintosh, whose knowledge of these times was unequalled, that Addison never, in any official document, affected wit or eloquence, and that his despatches are, without exception, remarkable for unpretending simplicity. Everybody who knows with what ease Addison's finest essays were produced must be convinced that, if well-turned phrases had been wanted, he would have had no difficulty in finding them. We are, however, inclined to believe, that the story is not absolutely without a foundation. It may well be that Addison did not know, till he had consulted experienced clerks who remembered the times when William the Third was absent on the Continent, in what form a letter from the Council of Regency to the King ought to be drawn. We think it very likely that the ablest statesmen of our time, Lord John Russell, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Palmerston, for example, would, in similar circumstances, be found quite as ignorant. Every office has some little mysteries which the dullest man may learn by a little attention, and which the greatest man cannot know by intuition. One paper must be signed by the chief of the department; another by



his deputy : to a third the royal sign manual is necessary. One communication is to be registered, and another is not. One sentence must be in black ink, and another in red ink. If the ablest Secretary for Ireland were moved to the India Board, if the ablest President of the India Board were moved to the War Office, he would require instruction on points like these ; and we do not doubt that Addison required such instruction when he became, for the first time, Secretary to the Lords Justices.

George the First took possession of his kingdom without opposition. A new ministry was formed, and a new Parliament favourable to the Whigs chosen. Sunderland was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland ; and Addison again went to Dublin as Chief Secretary.

At Dublin Swift resided ; and there was much speculation about the way in which the Dean and the Secretary would behave towards each other. The relations which existed between these remarkable men form an interesting and pleasing portion of literary history. They had early attached themselves to the same political party and to the same patrons. While Anne's Whig ministry was in power, the visits of Swift to London and the official residence of Addison in Ireland had given them opportunities of knowing each other. They were the two shrewdest observers of their age. But their observations on each other had led them to favourable conclusions. Swift did full justice to the rare powers of conversation which were latent under the bashful deportment of Addison. Addison, on the other hand, discerned much good nature under the severe look and manner of Swift ; and, indeed, the Swift of 1708 and the Swift of 1738 were two very different men.

But the paths of the two friends diverged widely. The Whig statesmen loaded Addison with solid benefits. They praised Swift, asked him to dinner, and did nothing more for him. His profession laid them under a difficulty. In the State they could not promote him ; and they had reason to fear that, by bestowing preferment in the Church on the author of the *Tale of a Tub*, they might give scandal to the public, which had no high opinion of their orthodoxy. He did not make fair allowance for the difficulties which prevented Halifax and Somers from serving him, thought



himself an ill-used man, sacrificed honour and consistency to revenge, joined the Tories, and became their most formidable champion. He soon found, however, that his old friends were less to blame than he had supposed. The dislike with which the Queen and the heads of the Church regarded him was insurmountable; and it was with the greatest difficulty that he obtained an ecclesiastical dignity of no great value, on condition of fixing his residence in a country which he detested.

Difference of political opinion had produced, not indeed a quarrel, but a coolness between Swift and Addison. They at length ceased altogether to see each other. Yet there was between them a tacit compact like that between the hereditary guests in the *Iliad*.

\*Εγχεα δ' ἀλλήλων ἀλεώμεθα καὶ δι' ὀμίλου.  
Πολλοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἐμοὶ Τρῶες κλειτοὶ τ' ἐπίκουροι,  
Κτείνειν, ὃν κε θεός γε πόρῃ καὶ ποσσὶ κιχείω,  
Πολλοὶ δ' αὖ σοὶ Ἀχαιοὶ, ἐναιρέμεν, ὃν κε δύνηαι.<sup>1</sup>

It is not strange that Addison, who calumniated and insulted nobody, should not have calumniated or insulted Swift. But it is remarkable that Swift, to whom neither genius nor virtue was sacred, and who generally seemed to find, like most other renegades, a peculiar pleasure in attacking old friends, should have shown so much respect and tenderness to Addison.

Fortune had now changed. The accession of the House of Hanover had secured in England the liberties of the people, and in Ireland the dominion of the Protestant caste. To that caste Swift was more odious than any other man. He was hooted and even pelted in the streets of Dublin; and could not venture to ride along the strand for his health without the attendance of armed servants. Many whom he had formerly served now libelled and insulted him. At this time Addison arrived. He had been advised not to

<sup>1</sup> ['But let us avoid one another's spears even through the press, for there are many of the Trojans and their famed allies for me to kill, whomsoever the god may bring me and I may overtake by speed of foot, and for thee are many of the Greeks to slay, whomsoever thou canst.'—Said by Diomedes to Glaucus, *Il.* vi. 226.]



show the smallest civility to the Dean of St. Patrick's. He had answered, with admirable spirit, that it might be necessary for men whose fidelity to their party was suspected, to hold no intercourse with political opponents; but that one who had been a steady Whig in the worst times might venture, when the good cause was triumphant, to shake hands with an old friend who was one of the vanquished Tories. His kindness was soothing to the proud and cruelly wounded spirit of Swift; and the two great satirists resumed their habits of friendly intercourse.

Those associates of Addison whose political opinions agreed with his shared his good fortune. He took Tickell with him to Ireland. He procured for Budgell a lucrative place in the same kingdom. Ambrose Philips was provided for in England. Steele had injured himself so much by his eccentricity and perverseness, that he obtained but a very small part of what he thought his due. He was, however, knighted; he had a place in the household; and he subsequently received other marks of favour from the Court.

Addison did not remain long in Ireland. In 1715, he quitted his secretaryship for a seat at the Board of Trade. In the same year his comedy of the *Drummer* was brought on the stage. The name of the author was not announced; the piece was coldly received; and some critics have expressed a doubt whether it were really Addison's. To us the evidence, both external and internal, seems decisive. It is not in Addison's best manner; but it contains numerous passages which no other writer known to us could have produced. It was again performed after Addison's death, and, being known to be his, was loudly applauded.

Towards the close of the year 1715, while the Rebellion was still raging in Scotland, Addison published the first number of a paper called the *Freeholder*. Among his political works the *Freeholder* is entitled to the first place. Even in the *Spectator* there are few serious papers nobler than the character of his friend Lord Somers, and certainly no satirical papers superior to those in which the Tory fox-hunter is introduced.<sup>1</sup> This character is the original of Squire Western, and is drawn with all Fielding's force, and

<sup>1</sup> [*Freeholder*, Nos. 22 and 47.]



with a delicacy of which Fielding was altogether destitute. As none of Addison's works exhibits stronger marks of his genius than the *Freeholder*, so none does more honour to his moral character. It is difficult to extol too highly the candour and humanity of a political writer whom even the excitement of civil war cannot hurry into unseemly violence. Oxford, it is well known, was then the stronghold of Toryism. The High Street had been repeatedly lined with bayonets in order to keep down the disaffected gownsmen; and traitors pursued by the messengers of the Government had been concealed in the garrets of several colleges. Yet the admonition which, even under such circumstances, Addison addressed to the University, is singularly gentle, respectful, and even affectionate. Indeed, he could not find it in his heart to deal harshly even with imaginary persons. His foxhunter, though ignorant, stupid, and violent, is at heart a good fellow, and is at last reclaimed by the clemency of the King. Steele was dissatisfied with his friend's moderation, and, though he acknowledged that the *Freeholder* was excellently written, complained that the ministry played on a lute when it was necessary to blow the trumpet. He accordingly determined to execute a flourish after his own fashion, and tried to rouse the public spirit of the nation by means of a paper called the *Town Talk*, which is now as utterly forgotten as his *Englishman*, as his *Crisis*, as his *Letter to the Bailiff of Stockbridge*, as his *Reader*, in short, as everything that he wrote without the help of Addison.

In the same year in which the *Drummer* was acted, and in which the first numbers of the *Freeholder* appeared, the estrangement of Pope and Addison became complete. Addison had from the first seen that Pope was false and malevolent. Pope had discovered that Addison was jealous. The discovery was made in a strange manner. Pope had written the *Rape of the Lock*, in two cantos, without supernatural machinery. These two cantos had been loudly applauded, and by none more loudly than by Addison. Then Pope thought of the Sylphs and Gnomes, Ariel, Momentilla, Crispissa, and Umbriel, and resolved to interweave the Rosicrucian mythology with the original fabric. He asked Addison's advice. Addison said that



the poem as it stood was a delicious little thing, and entreated Pope not to run the risk of marring what was so excellent in trying to mend it. Pope afterwards declared that this insidious counsel first opened his eyes to the baseness of him who gave it.

Now there can be no doubt that Pope's plan was most ingenious, and that he afterwards executed it with great skill and success. But does it necessarily follow that Addison's advice was bad? And if Addison's advice was bad, does it necessarily follow that it was given from bad motives? If a friend were to ask us whether we would advise him to risk his all in a lottery of which the chances were ten to one against him, we should do our best to dissuade him from running such a risk. Even if he were so lucky as to get the thirty thousand pound prize, we should not admit that we had counselled him ill; and we should certainly think it the height of injustice in him to accuse us of having been actuated by malice. We think Addison's advice good advice. It rested on a sound principle, the result of long and wide experience. The general rule undoubtedly is that, when a successful work of imagination has been produced, it should not be recast. We cannot at this moment call to mind a single instance in which this rule has been transgressed with happy effect, except the instance of the *Rape of the Lock*. Tasso recast his *Jerusalem*. Akenside<sup>1</sup> recast his *Pleasures of the Imagination*, and his *Epistle to Curio*. Pope himself, emboldened no doubt by the success with which he had expanded and remodelled the *Rape of the Lock*, made the same experiment on the *Dunciad*. All these attempts failed. Who was to foresee that Pope would, once in his life, be able to do what he could not himself do twice, and what nobody else has ever done?

Addison's advice was good. But had it been bad, why should we pronounce it dishonest? Scott tells us that one of his best friends predicted the failure of *Waverley*. Herder<sup>2</sup> adjured Goethe not to take so unpromising a subject as *Faust*. Hume<sup>3</sup> tried to dissuade Robertson from

<sup>1</sup> [A minor poet of the eighteenth century.]

<sup>2</sup> [A famous German critic of the eighteenth century.]

<sup>3</sup> [David Hume, the philosopher.]



writing the *History of Charles the Fifth*. Nay, Pope himself was one of those who prophesied that *Cato* would never succeed on the stage, and advised Addison to print it without risking a representation. But Scott, Goethe, Robertson, Addison, had the good sense and generosity to give their advisers credit for the best intentions. Pope's heart was not of the same kind with theirs.

In 1715, while he was engaged in translating the *Iliad*, he met Addison at a coffee-house. Philips and Budgell were there; but their sovereign got rid of them, and asked Pope to dine with him alone. After dinner, Addison said that he lay under a difficulty which he wished to explain. 'Tickell,' he said, 'translated some time ago the first book of the *Iliad*. I have promised to look it over and correct it. I cannot therefore ask to see yours; for that would be double dealing.' Pope made a civil reply, and begged that his second book might have the advantage of Addison's revision. Addison readily agreed, looked over the second book, and sent it back with warm commendations.

Tickell's version of the first book appeared soon after this conversation. In the preface, all rivalry was earnestly disclaimed. Tickell declared that he should not go on with the *Iliad*. That enterprise he should leave to powers which he admitted to be superior to his own. His only view, he said, in publishing this specimen was to bespeak the favour of the public to a translation of the *Odyssey*, in which he had made some progress.

Addison, and Addison's devoted followers, pronounced both the versions good, but maintained that Tickell's had more of the original. The town gave a decided preference to Pope's. We do not think it worth while to settle such a question of precedence. Neither of the rivals can be said to have translated the *Iliad*, unless, indeed, the word translation be used in the sense which it bears in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. When Bottom makes his appearance with an ass's head instead of his own, Peter Quince exclaims, 'Bless thee! Bottom, bless thee! thou art translated.' In this sense, undoubtedly, the readers of either Pope or Tickell may very properly exclaim, 'Bless thee! Homer; thou art translated indeed.'

Our readers will, we hope, agree with us in thinking that



no man in Addison's situation could have acted more fairly and kindly, both towards Pope, and towards Tickell, than he appears to have done. But an odious suspicion had sprung up in the mind of Pope. He fancied, and he soon firmly believed, that there was a deep conspiracy against his fame and his fortunes. The work on which he had staked his reputation was to be depreciated. The subscription, on which rested his hopes of a competence, was to be defeated. With this view Addison had made a rival translation: Tickell had consented to father it; and the wits of Button's had united to puff it.

Is there any external evidence to support this grave accusation? The answer is short. There is absolutely none.

Was there any internal evidence which proved Addison to be the author of this version? Was it a work which Tickell was incapable of producing? Surely not. Tickell was a Fellow of a College at Oxford, and must be supposed to have been able to construe the *Iliad*; and he was a better versifier than his friend. We are not aware that Pope pretended to have discovered any turns of expression peculiar to Addison. Had such turns of expression been discovered, they would be sufficiently accounted for by supposing Addison to have corrected his friend's lines, as he owned that he had done.

Is there anything in the character of the accused persons which makes the accusation probable? We answer confidently—nothing. Tickell was long after this time described by Pope himself as a very fair and worthy man. Addison had been, during many years, before the public. Literary rivals, political opponents, had kept their eyes on him. But neither envy nor faction, in their utmost rage, had ever imputed to him a single deviation from the laws of honour and of social morality. Had he been indeed a man meanly jealous of fame, and capable of stooping to base and wicked arts for the purpose of injuring his competitors, would his vices have remained latent so long? He was a writer of tragedy: had he ever injured Rowe? He was a writer of comedy: had he not done ample justice to Congreve, and given valuable help to Steele? He was a pamphleteer: have not his good nature and generosity



been acknowledged by Swift, his rival in fame and his adversary in politics ?

That Tickell should have been guilty of a villany seems to us highly improbable. That Addison should have been guilty of a villany seems to us highly improbable. But that these two men should have conspired together to commit a villany seems to us improbable in a tenfold degree. All that is known to us of their intercourse tends to prove that it was not the intercourse of two accomplices in crime. These are some of the lines in which Tickell poured forth his sorrow over the coffin of Addison :

Or dost thou warn poor mortals left behind,  
A task well suited to thy gentle mind ?  
Oh, if sometimes thy spotless form descend,  
To me thine aid, thou guardian genius, lend.  
When rage misguides me, or when fear alarms,  
When pain distresses, or when pleasure charms,  
In silent whisperings purer thoughts impart,  
And turn from ill a frail and feeble heart ;  
Lead through the paths thy virtue trod before,  
Till bliss shall join, nor death can part us more.

In what words, we should like to know, did this guardian genius invite his pupil to join in a plan such as the Editor of the *Satirist* would hardly dare to propose to the Editor of the *Age* ? <sup>1</sup>

We do not accuse Pope of bringing an accusation which he knew to be false. We have not the smallest doubt that he believed it to be true ; and the evidence on which he believed it he found in his own bad heart. His own life was one long series of tricks, as mean and as malicious as that of which he suspected Addison and Tickell. He was all stiletto and mask. To injure, to insult, and to save himself from the consequences of injury and insult by lying and equivocating, was the habit of his life. He published a lampoon on the Duke of Chandos <sup>2</sup> ; he was taxed with

<sup>1</sup> [Two scurrilous papers of the early nineteenth century. The editors of both were prosecuted for libel in 1843.]

<sup>2</sup> [Timon, in the *Epistle to Burlington*, 1731 :—

At Timon's Villa let us pass a day,

Where all cry out, 'What sums are thrown away,' &c.



it; and he lied and equivocated. He published a lampoon on Aaron Hill<sup>1</sup>; he was taxed with it; and he lied and equivocated. He published a still fouler lampoon on Lady Mary Wortley Montague<sup>2</sup>; he was taxed with it; and he lied with more than usual effrontery and vehemence. He puffed himself and abused his enemies under feigned names. He robbed himself of his own letters, and then raised the hue and cry after them. Besides his frauds of malignity, of fear, of interest, and of vanity, there were frauds which he seems to have committed from love of fraud alone. He had a habit of stratagem, a pleasure in outwitting all who came near him. Whatever his object might be, the indirect road to it was that which he preferred. For Bolingbroke, Pope undoubtedly felt as much love and veneration as it was in his nature to feel for any human being. Yet Pope was scarcely dead when it was discovered that, from no motive except the mere love of artifice, he had been guilty of an act of gross perfidy to Bolingbroke.

Nothing was more natural than that such a man as this should attribute to others that which he felt within himself. A plain, probable, coherent explanation is frankly given to him. He is certain that it is all a romance. A line of conduct scrupulously fair, and even friendly, is pursued towards him. He is convinced that it is merely a cover for a vile intrigue by which he is to be disgraced and ruined. It is vain to ask him for proofs. He has none, and wants none, except those which he carries in his own bosom.

Whether Pope's malignity at length provoked Addison to retaliate for the first and last time, cannot now be known with certainty. We have only Pope's story, which runs thus. A pamphlet appeared containing some reflections which stung Pope to the quick. What those reflections were, and whether they were reflections of which he had a right to complain, we have now no means of deciding.

The description exactly fits the character of the Duke, though Pope afterwards denied that it was intended for a portrait.]

<sup>1</sup> [A conceited and pushing author of the early eighteenth century. The lines *Dunciad* ii. 295, &c., are supposed to refer to him.]

<sup>2</sup> [Satirized under the name of Sappho in the epistle 'To a Lady', and as the wife of Avidien in the *Second Satire* in imitation of Horace.]



The Earl of Warwick, a foolish and vicious lad, who regarded Addison with the feelings with which such lads generally regard their best friends, told Pope, truly or falsely, that this pamphlet had been written by Addison's direction. When we consider what a tendency stories have to grow, in passing even from one honest man to another honest man, and when we consider that to the name of honest man neither Pope nor the Earl of Warwick had a claim, we are not disposed to attach much importance to this anecdote.

It is certain, however, that Pope was furious. He had already sketched the character of Atticus in prose. In his anger he turned this prose into the brilliant and energetic lines which everybody knows by heart, or ought to know by heart, and sent them to Addison. One charge which Pope has enforced with great skill is probably not without foundation. Addison was, we are inclined to believe, too fond of presiding over a circle of humble friends. Of the other imputations which these famous lines are intended to convey, scarcely one has ever been proved to be just, and some are certainly false. That Addison was not in the habit of 'damning with faint praise' appears from innumerable passages in his writings, and from none more than from those in which he mentions Pope. And it is not merely unjust, but ridiculous, to describe a man who made the fortune of almost every one of his intimate friends, as 'so obliging that he ne'er obliged'.

That Addison felt the sting of Pope's satire keenly, we cannot doubt. That he was conscious of one of the weaknesses with which he was reproached, is highly probable. But his heart, we firmly believe, acquitted him of the gravest part of the accusation. He acted like himself. As a satirist he was, at his own weapons, more than Pope's match; and he would have been at no loss for topics. A distorted and diseased body, tenanted by a yet more distorted and diseased mind; spite and envy thinly disguised by sentiments as benevolent and noble as those which Sir Peter Teazle admired in Mr. Joseph Surface<sup>1</sup>; a feeble sickly licentiousness; an odious love of filthy and noisome images; these were things which a genius less powerful than that to which we owe the *Spectator* could

<sup>1</sup> [Two characters in Sheridan's *School for Scandal*.]



easily have held up to the mirth and hatred of mankind. Addison had, moreover, at his command, other means of vengeance which a bad man would not have scrupled to use. He was powerful in the State. Pope was a Catholic; and, in those times, a minister would have found it easy to harass the most innocent Catholic by innumerable petty vexations. Pope, near twenty years later, said that 'through the lenity of the government alone he could live with comfort'. 'Consider,' he exclaimed, 'the injury that a man of high rank and credit may do to a private person, under penal laws and many other disadvantages.' It is pleasing to reflect that the only revenge which Addison took was to insert in the *Freeholder* a warm encomium on the translation of the *Iliad*, and to exhort all lovers of learning to put down their names as subscribers. There could be no doubt, he said, from the specimens already published, that the masterly hand of Pope would do as much for Homer as Dryden had done for Virgil. From that time to the end of his life, he always treated Pope, by Pope's own acknowledgement, with justice. Friendship was, of course, at an end.

One reason which induced the Earl of Warwick to play the ignominious part of talebearer on this occasion, may have been his dislike of the marriage which was about to take place between his mother and Addison. The Countess Dowager, a daughter of the old and honourable family of the Middletons of Chirk, a family which, in any country but ours, would be called noble, resided at Holland House. Addison had, during some years, occupied at Chelsea a small dwelling, once the abode of Nell Gwynn. Chelsea is now a district of London, and Holland House may be called a town residence. But, in the days of Anne and George the First, milkmaids and sportsmen wandered between green hedges and over fields bright with daisies, from Kensington almost to the shore of the Thames. Addison and Lady Warwick were country neighbours, and became intimate friends. The great wit and scholar tried to allure the young Lord from the fashionable amusements of beating watchmen, breaking windows, and rolling women in hogsheads down Holborn Hill<sup>1</sup>, to the study of letters

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. note 5, p. 60. Mohawks.]

*John Add.*



and the practice of virtue. These well-meant exertions did little good, however, either to the disciple or to the master. Lord Warwick grew up a rake; and Addison fell in love. The mature beauty of the Countess has been celebrated by poets in language which, after a very large allowance has been made for flattery, would lead us to believe that she was a fine woman; and her rank doubtless heightened her attractions. The courtship was long. The hopes of the lover appear to have risen and fallen with the fortunes of his party. His attachment was at length matter of such notoriety that, when he visited Ireland for the last time, Rowe addressed some consolatory verses to the Chloe of Holland House. It strikes us as a little strange that, in these verses, Addison should be called *Lycidas*<sup>1</sup>, a name of singularly evil omen for a swain just about to cross St. George's Channel.

At length Chloe capitulated. Addison was indeed able to treat with her on equal terms. He had reason to expect preferment even higher than that which he had attained. He had inherited the fortune of a brother who died Governor of Madras. He had purchased an estate in Warwickshire, and had been welcomed to his domain in very tolerable verse by one of the neighbouring squires, the poetical foxhunter, William Somerville. In August 1716, the newspapers announced that Joseph Addison, Esquire, famous for many excellent works both in verse and prose, had espoused the Countess Dowager of Warwick.

He now fixed his abode at Holland House, a house which can boast of a greater number of inmates distinguished in political and literary history than any other private dwelling in England. His portrait still hangs there. The features are pleasing; the complexion is remarkably fair; but, in the expression, we trace rather the gentleness of his disposition than the force and keenness of his intellect.

Not long after his marriage he reached the height of civil greatness. The Whig Government had, during some time, been torn by internal dissensions. Lord Townshend led one section of the Cabinet, Lord Sunderland the other. At length, in the spring of 1717, Sunderland triumphed.

<sup>1</sup> [A reference to Milton's *Lycidas*, an elegy on the death of Edward King, who was drowned while crossing St. George's Channel.]



Townshend retired from office, and was accompanied by Walpole and Cowper. Sunderland proceeded to reconstruct the Ministry; and Addison was appointed Secretary of State. It is certain that the Seals were pressed upon him, and were at first declined by him. Men equally versed in official business might easily have been found; and his colleagues knew that they could not expect assistance from him in debate. He owed his elevation to his popularity, to his stainless probity, and to his literary fame.

But scarcely had Addison entered the Cabinet when his health began to fail. From one serious attack he recovered in the autumn; and his recovery was celebrated in Latin verses, worthy of his own pen, by Vincent Bourne, who was then at Trinity College, Cambridge. A relapse soon took place; and, in the following spring, Addison was prevented by a severe asthma from discharging the duties of his post. He resigned it, and was succeeded by his friend Craggs, a young man whose natural parts, though little improved by cultivation, were quick and showy, whose graceful person and winning manners had made him generally acceptable in society, and who, if he had lived, would probably have been the most formidable of all the rivals of Walpole.

As yet there was no Joseph Hume<sup>1</sup>. The Ministers, therefore, were able to bestow on Addison a retiring pension of fifteen hundred pounds a year. In what form this pension was given we are not told by the biographers, and have not time to inquire. But it is certain that Addison did not vacate his seat in the House of Commons.

Rest of mind and body seems to have re-established his health; and he thanked God, with cheerful piety, for having set him free both from his office and from his asthma. Many years seemed to be before him, and he meditated many works, a tragedy on the death of Socrates, a translation of the Psalms, a treatise on the evidences of Christianity. Of this last performance, a part, which we could well spare, has come down to us.

But the fatal complaint soon returned, and gradually

<sup>1</sup> [1777-1855. Leader of the Radical party for many years, and always endeavouring to enforce retrenchment and economy.]



prevailed against all the resources of medicine. It is melancholy to think that the last months of such a life should have been overclouded both by domestic and by political vexations. A tradition which began early, which has been generally received, and to which we have nothing to oppose, has represented his wife as an arrogant and imperious woman. It is said that, till his health failed him, he was glad to escape from the Countess Dowager and her magnificent dining-room, blazing with the gilded devices of the house of Rich, to some tavern where he could enjoy a laugh, a talk about Virgil and Boileau, and a bottle of claret, with the friends of his happier days. All those friends, however, were not left to him. Sir Richard Steele had been gradually estranged by various causes. He considered himself as one who, in evil times, had braved martyrdom for his political principles, and demanded, when the Whig party was triumphant, a large compensation for what he had suffered when it was militant. The Whig leaders took a very different view of his claims. They thought that he had, by his own petulance and folly, brought them as well as himself into trouble, and though they did not absolutely neglect him, doled out favours to him with a sparing hand. It was natural that he should be angry with them, and especially angry with Addison. But what above all seems to have disturbed Sir Richard, was the elevation of Tickell, who, at thirty, was made by Addison Under-secretary of State; while the Editor of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, the author of the *Crisis*, the member for Stockbridge who had been persecuted for firm adherence to the House of Hanover, was, at near fifty, forced, after many solicitations and complaints, to content himself with a share in the patent of Drury Lane theatre. Steele himself says, in his celebrated letter to Congreve, that Addison, by his preference of Tickell, 'incurred the warmest resentment of other gentlemen'; and everything seems to indicate that, of those resentful gentlemen, Steele was himself one.

While poor Sir Richard was brooding over what he considered as Addison's unkindness, a new cause of quarrel arose. The Whig party, already divided against itself, was rent by a new schism. The celebrated Bill for limiting



the number of Peers had been brought in. The proud Duke of Somerset, first in rank of all the nobles whose religion permitted them to sit in Parliament, was the ostensible author of the measure. But it was supported, and in truth devised, by the Prime Minister.

We are satisfied that the Bill was most pernicious ; and we fear that the motives which induced Sunderland to frame it were not honourable to him. But we cannot deny that it was supported by many of the best and wisest men of that age. Nor was this strange. The royal prerogative had, within the memory of the generation then in the vigour of life, been so grossly abused, that it was still regarded with a jealousy which, when the peculiar situation of the House of Brunswick is considered, may perhaps be called immoderate. The particular prerogative of creating peers had, in the opinion of the Whigs, been grossly abused by Queen Anne's last ministry ; and even the Tories admitted that her Majesty, in swamping, as it has since been called, the Upper House, had done what only an extreme case could justify. The theory of the English constitution, according to many high authorities, was that three independent powers, the sovereign, the nobility, and the commons, ought constantly to act as checks on each other. If this theory were sound, it seemed to follow that to put one of these powers under the absolute control of the other two, was absurd. But if the number of peers were unlimited, it could not well be denied that the Upper House was under the absolute control of the Crown and the Commons, and was indebted only to their moderation for any power which it might be suffered to retain.

Steele took part with the Opposition, Addison with the Ministers. Steele, in a paper called the *Plebeian*, vehemently attacked the Bill. Sunderland called for help on Addison, and Addison obeyed the call. In a paper called the *Old Whig*, he answered, and indeed refuted, Steele's arguments. It seems to us that the premises of both the controversialists were unsound, that on those premises Addison reasoned well and Steele ill, and that consequently Addison brought out a false conclusion while Steele blundered upon the truth. In style, in wit, and in politeness, Addison main-



tained his superiority, though the *Old Whig* is by no means one of his happiest performances.

At first, both the anonymous opponents observed the laws of propriety. But at length Steele so far forgot himself as to throw an odious imputation on the morals of the chiefs of the administration. Addison replied with severity, but, in our opinion, with less severity than was due to so grave an offence against morality and decorum; nor did he, in his just anger, forget for a moment the laws of good taste and good breeding. One calumny which has been often repeated, and never yet contradicted, it is our duty to expose. It is asserted in the *Biographia Britannica*, that Addison designated Steele as 'little Dicky'. This assertion was repeated by Johnson, who had never seen the *Old Whig*, and was therefore excusable. It has also been repeated by Miss Aikin, who has seen the *Old Whig*, and for whom therefore there is less excuse. Now, it is true that the words 'little Dicky' occur in the *Old Whig*, and that Steele's name was Richard. It is equally true that the words 'little Isaac' occur in the *Duenna*, and that Newton's name was Isaac. But we confidently affirm that Addison's little Dicky had no more to do with Steele, than Sheridan's little Isaac with Newton. If we apply the words 'little Dicky' to Steele, we deprive a very lively and ingenious passage, not only of all its wit, but of all its meaning. Little Dicky was the nickname of Henry Norris, an actor of remarkably small stature, but of great humour, who played the usurer Gomez, then a most popular part, in Dryden's *Spanish Friar*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We will transcribe the whole paragraph. How it can ever have been misunderstood is unintelligible to us.

'But our author's chief concern is for the poor House of Commons, whom he represents as naked and defenceless, when the Crown, by losing this prerogative, would be less able to protect them against the power of a House of Lords. Who forbears laughing when the *Spanish Friar* represents little Dicky, under the person of Gomez, insulting the Colonel that was able to fright him out of his wits with a single frown? This Gomez, says he, flew upon him like a dragon, got him down, the Devil being strong in him, and gave him bastinado on bastinado, and buffet on buffet, which the poor Colonel, being prostrate, suffered with a most Christian patience. The improbability of the fact never fails to raise mirth in the audience; and one may venture to answer for a British House of Commons, if we may guess, from its conduct hitherto, that it will scarce be either so tame or so weak as our author supposes.' (Macaulay.)



The merited reproof which Steele had received, though softened by some kind and courteous expressions, galled him bitterly. He replied with little force and great acrimony; but no rejoinder appeared. Addison was fast hastening to his grave; and had, we may well suppose, little disposition to prosecute a quarrel with an old friend. His complaint had terminated in dropsy. He bore up long and manfully. But at length he abandoned all hope, dismissed his physicians, and calmly prepared himself to die.

His works he intrusted to the care of Tickell, and dedicated them a very few days before his death to Craggs, in a letter written with the sweet and graceful eloquence of a Saturday's *Spectator*. In this, his last composition, he alluded to his approaching end in words so manly, so cheerful, and so tender, that it is difficult to read them without tears. At the same time he earnestly recommended the interests of Tickell to the care of Craggs.

Within a few hours of the time at which this dedication was written, Addison sent to beg Gay<sup>1</sup>, who was then living by his wits about town, to come to Holland House. Gay went, and was received with great kindness. To his amazement his forgiveness was implored by the dying man. Poor Gay, the most good-natured and simple of mankind, could not imagine what he had to forgive. There was, however, some wrong, the remembrance of which weighed on Addison's mind, and which he declared himself anxious to repair. He was in a state of extreme exhaustion; and the parting was doubtless a friendly one on both sides. Gay supposed that some plan to serve him had been in agitation at Court, and had been frustrated by Addison's influence. Nor is this improbable. Gay had paid assiduous court to the Royal Family. But in the Queen's days he had been the eulogist of Bolingbroke, and was still connected with many Tories. It is not strange that Addison, while heated by conflict, should have thought himself justified in obstructing the preferment of one whom he might regard as a political enemy. Neither is it strange that, when reviewing his whole life, and earnestly scrutinizing all his motives, he should think that he had acted an unkind and

<sup>1</sup> [1685-1732. Author of the *Beggar's Opera*.]



ungenerous part, in using his power against a distressed man of letters, who was as harmless and as helpless as a child.

One inference may be drawn from this anecdote. It appears that Addison, on his death-bed, called himself to a strict account, and was not at ease till he had asked pardon for an injury which it was not even suspected that he had committed, for an injury which would have caused disquiet only to a very tender conscience. Is it not then reasonable to infer that, if he had really been guilty of forming a base conspiracy against the fame and fortunes of a rival, he would have expressed some remorse for so serious a crime? But it is unnecessary to multiply arguments and evidence for the defence, when there is neither argument nor evidence for the accusation.

The last moments of Addison were perfectly serene. His interview with his son-in-law is universally known. 'See,' he said, 'how a Christian can die.' The piety of Addison was, in truth, of a singularly cheerful character. The feeling which predominates in all his devotional writings is gratitude. God was to him the all-wise and all-powerful friend who had watched over his cradle with more than maternal tenderness; who had listened to his cries before they could form themselves in prayer; who had preserved his youth from the snares of vice; who had made his cup run over with worldly blessings; who had doubled the value of those blessings, by bestowing a thankful heart to enjoy them, and dear friends to partake them; who had rebuked the waves of the Ligurian gulf, had purified the autumnal air of the Campagna, and had restrained the avalanches of Mont Cenis. Of the Psalms, his favourite was that which represents the Ruler of all things under the endearing image of a shepherd, whose crook guides the flock safe, through gloomy and desolate glens, to meadows well watered and rich with herbage. On that goodness to which he ascribed all the happiness of his life, he relied in the hour of death with the love which casteth out fear. He died on the seventeenth of June 1719. He had just entered on his forty-eighth year.

His body lay in state in the Jerusalem Chamber<sup>1</sup>, and

<sup>1</sup> [A small room in the precincts of Westminster Abbey. See *Henry IV*, Part II, iv. 5. 233.]



was borne thence to the Abbey at dead of night. The choir sang a funeral hymn. Bishop Atterbury<sup>1</sup>, one of those Tories who had loved and honoured the most accomplished of the Whigs, met the corpse, and led the procession by torchlight, round the shrine of Saint Edward and the graves of the Plantagenets, to the Chapel of Henry the Seventh. On the north side of that Chapel, in the vault of the House of Albemarle, the coffin of Addison lies next to the coffin of Montague. Yet a few months; and the same mourners passed again along the same aisle. The same sad anthem was again chanted. The same vault was again opened; and the coffin of Craggs was placed close to the coffin of Addison.

Many tributes were paid to the memory of Addison; but one alone is now remembered. Tickell bewailed his friend in an elegy which would do honour to the greatest name in our literature, and which unites the energy and magnificence of Dryden to the tenderness and purity of Cowper. This fine poem was prefixed to a superb edition of Addison's works, which was published, in 1721, by subscription. The names of the subscribers proved how widely his fame had been spread. That his countrymen should be eager to possess his writings, even in a costly form, is not wonderful. But it is wonderful that, though English literature was then little studied on the continent, Spanish Grandees, Italian Prelates, Marshals of France, should be found in the list. Among the most remarkable names are those of the Queen of Sweden, of Prince Eugene, of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, of the Dukes of Parma, Modena, and Guastalla, of the Doge of Genoa, of the Regent Orleans, and of Cardinal Dubois. We ought to add that this edition, though eminently beautiful, is in some important points defective; nor, indeed, do we yet possess a complete collection of Addison's writings.

It is strange that neither his opulent and noble widow, nor any of his powerful and attached friends, should have thought of placing even a simple tablet, inscribed with his name, on the walls of the Abbey. It was not till three generations had laughed and wept over his pages that the

<sup>1</sup> [Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Canterbury. There is a delightful portrait of him in No. 66 of the *Tatler*.]



omission was supplied by the public veneration. At length, in our own time, his image, skilfully graven, appeared in Poets' Corner. It represents him, as we can conceive him, clad in his dressing-gown, and freed from his wig, stepping from his parlour at Chelsea into his trim little garden, with the account of the Everlasting Club <sup>1</sup>, or the Loves of Hilpa and Shalum <sup>2</sup>, just finished for the next day's *Spectator*, in his hand. Such a mark of national respect was due to the unsullied statesman, to the accomplished scholar, to the master of pure English eloquence, to the consummate painter of life and manners. It was due, above all, to the great satirist, who alone knew how to use ridicule without abusing it, who, without inflicting a wound, effected a great social reform, and who reconciled wit and virtue, after a long and disastrous separation, during which wit had been led astray by profligacy, and virtue by fanaticism.

<sup>1</sup> [*Spectator*, No. 72.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Spectator*, No. 584.]



# LECTURE ON ADDISON<sup>1</sup>

BY WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

WE have seen in Swift a humorous philosopher, whose truth frightens one, and whose laughter makes one melancholy. We have had in Congreve a humorous observer of another school, to whom the world seems to have no moral at all, and whose ghastly doctrine seems to be that we should eat, drink, and be merry when we can, and go to the deuce (if there be a deuce) when the time comes. We come now to a humour that flows from quite a different heart and spirit—a wit that makes us laugh and leaves us good and happy; to one of the kindest benefactors that society has ever had, and I believe you have divined already that I am about to mention Addison's honoured name.

From reading over his writings, and the biographies which we have of him, amongst which the famous article in the *Edinburgh Review*<sup>2</sup> may be cited as a magnificent statue of the great writer and moralist of the last age, raised by the love and the marvellous skill and genius of one of the most illustrious artists of our own; looking at that calm, fair face, and clear countenance—those chiselled features pure and cold, I can't but fancy that this great man, in this respect, like him of whom we spoke in the last lecture, was also one of the lonely ones of the world.

<sup>1</sup> Taken from the Lecture on Congreve and Addison in the *English Humourists*.

<sup>2</sup> [Macaulay's Essay.]

'Many who praise virtue do no more than praise it. Yet it is reasonable to believe that Addison's profession and practice were at no great variance; since, amidst that storm of faction in which most of his life was passed, though his station made him conspicuous, and his activity made him formidable, the character given him by his friends was never contradicted by his enemies. Of those with whom interest or opinion united him, he had not only the esteem but the kindness; and of others, whom the violence of opposition drove against him, though he might lose the love, he retained the reverence.'—JOHNSON.



Such men have very few equals, and they don't herd with those. It is in the nature of such lords of intellect to be solitary—they are in the world but not of it; and our minor struggles, brawls, successes, pass under them.

Kind, just, serene, impartial, his fortitude not tried beyond easy endurance, his affections not much used, for his books were his family, and his society was in public; admirably wiser, wittier, calmer, and more instructed than almost every man with whom he met, how could Addison suffer, desire, admire, feel much? I may expect a child to admire me for being taller or writing more cleverly than she; but how can I ask my superior to say that I am a wonder when he knows better than I? In Addison's days you could scarcely show him a literary performance, a sermon, or a poem, or a piece of literary criticism, but he felt he could do better. His justice must have made him indifferent. He didn't praise, because he measured his compeers by a higher standard than common people have.<sup>1</sup> How was he who was so tall to look up to any but the loftiest genius? He must have stooped to put himself on a level with most men. By that profusion of graciousness and smiles, with which Goethe or Scott, for instance, greeted almost every literary beginner, every small literary adventurer who came to his court and went away charmed from the great king's audience, and cuddling to his heart the compliment which his literary majesty had paid him—each of the two good-natured potentates of letters brought their star and riband into discredit. Everybody had his Majesty's orders. Everybody had his Majesty's cheap portrait, on a box surrounded with diamonds worth two-pence a-piece. A very great and just and wise man ought not to praise indiscriminately, but give his idea of the truth. Addison praises the ingenious Mr. Pinkethman:<sup>2</sup> Addison praises the ingenious Mr. Doggett<sup>3</sup> the actor, whose benefit is coming off that night: Addison praises

<sup>1</sup> 'Addison was perfect good company with intimates, and had something more charming in his conversation than I ever knew in any other man; but with any mixture of strangers, and sometimes only with one, he seemed to preserve his dignity much, with a stiff sort of silence.'—POPE, *Spence's Anecdotes*. (Thackeray.)

<sup>2</sup> [*Spectator*, No. 370.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Spectator*, No. 502.]



Don Saltero<sup>1</sup>: Addison praises Milton with all his heart, bends his knee and frankly pays homage to that imperial genius.<sup>2</sup> But between those degrees of his men his praise is very scanty. I don't think the great Mr. Addison liked young Mr. Pope, the Papist, much; I don't think he abused him. But when Mr. Addison's men abused Mr. Pope I don't think Addison took his pipe out of his mouth to contradict them.<sup>3</sup>

Addison's father was a clergyman of good repute in Wiltshire, and rose in the church.<sup>4</sup> His famous son never lost his clerical training and scholastic gravity, and was called 'a parson in a tye-wig'<sup>5</sup> in London afterwards at

<sup>1</sup> [John Salter, a noted coffee-house keeper, described by Steele in No. 34 of the *Tatler*.]

<sup>2</sup> 'Milton's chief talent, and indeed his distinguishing excellence, lies in the sublimity of his thoughts. There are others of the modern, who rival him in every other part of poetry; but in the greatness of his sentiments he triumphs over all the poets, both modern and ancient, Homer alone excepted. It is impossible for the imagination of man to disturb itself with greater ideas than those which he has laid together in his first, second, and sixth books.'—*Spectator*, No. 279.

'If I were to name a poet that is a perfect master in all these arts of working on the imagination, I think Milton may pass for one.'—*Ibid.*, No. 417.

These famous papers appeared in each Saturday's *Spectator*, from January 19 to May 3, 1712. Besides his services to Milton, we may place those he did to Sacred Music. (Thackeray.)

<sup>3</sup> 'Addison was very kind to me at first, but my bitter enemy afterwards.'—POPE, *Spence's Anecdotes*.

'“Leave him as soon as you can,” said Addison to me, speaking of Pope; “he will certainly play you some devilish trick else: he has an appetite to satire.”’—LADY WORTLEY MONTAGU, *Spence's Anecdotes*. (Thackeray.)

<sup>4</sup> Lancelot Addison, his father, was the son of another Lancelot Addison, a clergyman in Westmoreland. He became Dean of Lichfield and Archdeacon of Coventry. (Thackeray.)

<sup>5</sup> 'The remark of Mandeville, who, when he had passed an evening in his company, declared that he was “a parson in a tiewig”, can detract little from his character. He was always reserved to strangers, and was not incited to uncommon freedom by a character like that of Mandeville.'—JOHNSON, *Lives of the Poets*.

'Old Jacob Tonson did not like Mr. Addison: he had a quarrel with him, and, after his quitting the secretaryship, used frequently to say of him—“One day or other you'll see that man a bishop—I'm sure he looks that way; and indeed I ever thought him a priest in his heart.”’—POPE, *Spence's Anecdotes*.

'Mr. Addison stayed above a year at Blois. He would rise as early



a time when tye-wigs were only worn by the laity, and the fathers of theology did not think it decent to appear except in a full bottom. Having been at school at Salisbury and the Charterhouse, in 1687, when he was fifteen years old, he went to Queen's College, Oxford, where he speedily began to distinguish himself by the making of Latin verses. The beautiful and fanciful poem of *The Pigmies and the Cranes* is still read by lovers of that sort of exercise; and verses are extant in honour of King William, by which it appears that it was the loyal youth's custom to toast that sovereign in bumpers of purple Lyaeus; and many more works are in the Collection, including one on the peace of Ryswick, in 1697, which was so good that Montague got him a pension of £300 a year, on which Addison set out on his travels.

During his ten years at Oxford, Addison had deeply imbued himself with the Latin poetical literature, and had these poets at his fingers' ends when he travelled in Italy.<sup>1</sup> His patron went out of office, and his pension was unpaid: and hearing that this great scholar, now eminent and known to the literati of Europe (the great Boileau,<sup>2</sup> upon perusal of Mr. Addison's elegant hexameters, was first made aware that England was not altogether a barbarous nation)—hearing that the celebrated Mr. Addison, of Oxford, proposed to travel as governor to a young gentleman on the grand tour, the great Duke of Somerset proposed to Mr. Addison to accompany his son, Lord Hartford.


Mr. Addison was delighted to be of use to his Grace and

as between two and three in the height of summer, and lie abed till between eleven and twelve in the depth of winter. He was untalkative whilst here, and often thoughtful: sometimes so lost in thought, that I have come into his room and staid five minutes there before he has known anything of it. He had his masters generally at supper with him; kept very little company beside; and had no amour that I know of; and I think I should have known of it, if he had had any.'—ABBÉ PHILIPPEAUX of Blois, *Spence's Anecdotes*. (Thackeray.)

<sup>1</sup> 'His knowledge of the Latin poets, from Lucretius and Catullus down to Claudian and Prudentius, was singularly exact and profound.'—MACAULAY. (Thackeray.)

<sup>2</sup> 'Our country owes it to him, that the famous Monsieur Boileau first conceived an opinion of the English genius for poetry, by perusing the present he made him of the *Musae Anglicanae*.'—TICKELL, Preface to *Addison's Works*. (Thackeray.)



his lordship, his Grace's son, and expressed himself ready to set forth. 

His Grace the Duke of Somerset now announced to one of the most famous scholars of Oxford and Europe that it was his gracious intention to allow my Lord Hartford's tutor one hundred guineas per annum. Mr. Addison wrote back that his services were his Grace's, but he by no means found his account in the recompense for them. The negotiation was broken off. They parted with a profusion of *congées* on one side and the other.

Addison remained abroad for some time, living in the best society of Europe. How could he do otherwise? He must have been one of the finest gentlemen the world ever saw: at all moments of life serene and courteous, cheerful and calm.<sup>1</sup> He could scarcely ever have had a degrading thought. He might have omitted a virtue or two, or many, but could not have had many faults committed for which he need blush or turn pale. When warmed into confidence, his conversation appears to have been so delightful that the greatest wits sat rapt and charmed to listen to him. No man bore poverty and narrow fortune with a more lofty cheerfulness. His letters to his friends at this period of his life, when he had lost his government pension and given up his college chances, are full of courage and a gay confidence and philosophy: and they are none the worse in my eyes, and I hope not in those of his last and greatest biographer (though Mr. Macaulay is bound to own and lament a certain weakness for wine, which the great and good Joseph Addison notoriously possessed, in common with countless gentlemen of his time), because some of the letters are written when his honest hand was shaking a little in the morning after libations to purple Lyaeus over-night. He was fond of drinking the healths of his friends: he writes to Wyche, of Hamburgh, gratefully remembering Wyche's 'hoc'. 'I have been drinking your health to-day with Sir Richard Shirley,' he writes to Bathurst<sup>2</sup>. 'I have

<sup>1</sup> 'It was my fate to be much with the wits; my father was acquainted with all of them. *Addison was the best company in the world.* I never knew anybody that had so much wit as Congreve.'—LADY WORTLEY MONTAGU, *Spence's Anecdotes*. (Thackeray.)

<sup>2</sup> [The first Lord Bathurst, the friend of Pope.]



lately had the honour to meet my Lord Effingham at Amsterdam, where we have drunk Mr. Wood's health a hundred times in excellent champagne,' he writes again. Swift<sup>1</sup> describes him over his cups, when Joseph yielded to a temptation which Jonathan resisted. Joseph was of a cold nature, and needed perhaps the fire of wine to warm his blood. If he was a parson, he wore a tye-wig, recollect. A better and more Christian man scarcely ever breathed than Joseph Addison. If he had not that little weakness for wine—why, we could scarcely have found a fault with him, and could not have liked him as we do.<sup>2</sup>

At thirty-three years of age, this most distinguished wit, scholar, and gentleman was without a profession and an income. His book of *Travels*<sup>3</sup> had failed: his *Dialogues on Medals* had had no particular success: his Latin verses,

<sup>1</sup> It is pleasing to remember that the relation between Swift and Addison was, on the whole, satisfactory, from first to last. The value of Swift's testimony, when nothing personal inflamed his vision or warped his judgement, can be doubted by nobody.

'Sept. 10, 1710.—I sat till ten in the evening with Addison and Steele.

'11.—Mr. Addison and I dined together at his lodgings, and I sat with him part of this evening.

'18.—To-day I dined with Mr. Stratford at Mr. Addison's retirement near Chelsea. . . . I will get what good offices I can from Mr. Addison.

'27.—To-day all our company dined at Will Frankland's, with Steele and Addison, too.

'29.—I dined with Mr. Addison, &c.'—*Journal to Stella*.

Addison inscribed a presentation copy of his *Travels* 'To Dr. Jonathan Swift, the most agreeable companion, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of his age'.—SCOTT. From the information of Mr. Theophilus Swift.

'Mr. Addison, who goes over first secretary, is a most excellent person; and being my most intimate friend, I shall use all my credit to set him right in his notions of persons and things.'—*Letters*.

'I examine my heart, and can find no other reason why I write to you now, besides that great love and esteem I have always had for you. I have nothing to ask you either for my friend or for myself.'—SWIFT to ADDISON (1717). SCOTT'S *Swift*, Vol. XIX, p. 274.

Political differences only dulled for a while their friendly communications. Time renewed them; and Tickell enjoyed Swift's friendship as a legacy from the man with whose memory his is so honourably connected. (Thackeray.)

<sup>2</sup> 'Addison usually studied all the morning; then met his party at Button's; dined there, and stayed five or six hours, and sometimes far into the night. I was of the company for about a year, but found it too much for me: it hurt my health, and so I quitted it.'—POPE, *Spence's Anecdotes*. (Thackeray.)

<sup>3</sup> [*Remarks on Several Parts of Italy.*]



even though reported the best since Virgil, or Statius at any rate, had not brought him a Government-place, and Addison was living up two shabby pair of stairs in the Haymarket (in a poverty over which old Samuel Johnson rather chuckles), when in these shabby rooms an emissary from Government and Fortune came and found him.<sup>1</sup> A poem was wanted about the Duke of Marlborough's victory of Blenheim. Would Mr. Addison write one? Mr. Boyle, afterwards Lord Carleton, took back the reply to the Lord Treasurer Godolphin, that Mr. Addison would. When the poem had reached a certain stage, it was carried to Godolphin; and the last lines which he read were these:—

But O, my muse! what numbers wilt thou find  
To sing the furious troops in battle join'd?  
Methinks I hear the drum's tumultuous sound,  
The victor's shouts and dying groans confound;  
The dreadful burst of cannon rend the skies,  
And all the thunders of the battle rise.  
'T was then great Marlborough's mighty soul was proved,  
That, in the shock of charging hosts unmoved,  
Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,  
Examined all the dreadful scenes of war:  
In peaceful thought the field of death surveyed,  
To fainting squadrons lent the timely aid,  
Inspired repulsed battalions to engage,  
And taught the doubtful battle where to rage.  
So when an angel by divine command,  
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land  
(Such as of late o'er pale Britannia passed),  
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;  
And, pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,  
Rides on the whirlwind and directs the storm.'

Addison left off at a good moment. That simile was pronounced to be of the greatest ever produced in poetry.

<sup>1</sup> 'When he returned to England (in 1702), with a meanness of appearance which gave testimony of the difficulties to which he had been reduced, he found his old patrons out of power, and was, therefore, for a time, at full leisure for the cultivation of his mind.'—JOHNSON, *Lives of the Poets*. (Thackeray.)



That angel, that good angel, flew off with Mr. Addison, and landed him in the place of Commissioner of Appeals—vice Mr. Locke<sup>1</sup> providentially promoted. In the following year, Mr. Addison went to Hanover with Lord Halifax, and the year after was made Under-Secretary of State. O angel visits! you come 'few and far between' to literary gentlemen's lodgings! Your wings seldom quiver at second-floor windows now!

You laugh? You think it is in the power of few writers nowadays to call up such an angel? Well perhaps not; but permit us to comfort ourselves by pointing out that there are in the poem of the *Campaign* some as bad lines as heart can desire: and to hint that Mr. Addison did very wisely in not going further with my Lord Godolphin than that angelical simile. Do allow me, just for a little harmless mischief, to read you some of the lines which follow. Here is the interview between the Duke and the King of the Romans after the battle:—

Austria's young monarch, whose imperial sway  
Sceptres and thrones are destined to obey,  
Whose boasted ancestry so high extends  
That in the pagan Gods his lineage ends,  
Comes from afar, in gratitude to own  
The great supporter of his father's throne.  
What tides of glory to his bosom ran  
Clasped in th' embraces of the godlike man!  
How were his eyes with pleasing wonder fixt,  
To see such fire with so much sweetness mixt!  
Such easy greatness, such a graceful port,  
So learned and finished for the camp or court!

How many fourth-form boys at Mr. Addison's school of Charterhouse could write as well as that now? The *Campaign* has blunders, triumphant as it was; and weak points like all campaigns.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [The philosopher; author of the *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690).]

<sup>2</sup> 'Mr. Addison wrote very fluently; but he was sometimes very slow and scrupulous in correcting. He would show his verses to several friends; and would alter almost everything that any of them hinted at as wrong. He seemed to be too diffident of himself; and too much concerned about his character as a poet; or (as he worded it), too



In the year 1713 *Cato* came out. Swift has left a description of the first night of the performance. All the laurels of Europe were scarcely sufficient for the author of this prodigious poem.<sup>1</sup> Laudations of Whig and Tory chiefs, popular ovations, complimentary garlands from literary men, translations in all languages, delight and homage from all—save from John Dennis in a minority of one—Mr. Addison was called the ‘great Mr. Addison’ after this.

solicitous for that kind of praise, which, God knows, is but a very little matter after all!’—POPE, *Spence’s Anecdotes*. (Thackeray.)

‘As to poetical affairs,’ says Pope, in 1713, ‘I am content at present to be a bare looker-on. . . . *Cato* was not so much the wonder of Rome in his days, as he is of Britain in ours; and though all the foolish industry possible has been used to make it thought a party play, yet what the author once said of another may the most properly in the world be applied to him on this occasion:

Envy itself is dumb—in wonder lost;

And factions strive who shall applaud him most.

‘The numerous and violent claps of the Whig party on the one side of the theatre were echoed back by the Tories on the other; while the author sweated behind the scenes with concern to find their applause proceeding more from the hands than the head. . . . I believe you have heard that, after all the applauses of the opposite faction, my Lord Bolingbroke sent for Booth, who played *Cato*, into the box, and presented him with fifty guineas in acknowledgement (as he expressed it) for defending the cause of liberty so well against a perpetual dictator.’—POPE’S Letter to SIR W. TRUMBULL.

*Cato* ran for thirty-five nights without interruption. Pope wrote the Prologue, and Garth the Epilogue.

It is worth noticing how many things in *Cato* keep their ground as habitual quotations, e. g. :—

. . . . big with the fate  
Of *Cato* and of Rome.

’Tis not in mortals to command success,  
But we’ll do more, Sempronius, we’ll deserve it.  
Blesses his stars, and thinks it luxury.

I think the Romans call it Stoicism.

My voice is still for war.

When vice prevails, and impious men bear sway,  
The post of honour is a private station.

Not to mention—

The woman who deliberates is lost.

And the eternal—

Plato, thou reasonest well,  
which avenges, perhaps, on the public their neglect of the play!  
(Thackeray.)



The Coffee-house Senate saluted him Divus : it was heresy to question that decree.

Meanwhile he was writing political papers and advancing in the political profession. He went Secretary to Ireland. He was appointed Secretary of State in 1717. And letters of his are extant, bearing date some year or two before, and written to young Lord Warwick, in which he addresses him as 'my dearest lord', and asks affectionately about his studies, and writes very prettily about nightingales, and birds' nests, which he has found at Fulham for his lordship. Those nightingales were intended to warble in the ear of Lord Warwick's mamma. Addison married her ladyship in 1716 ; and died at Holland House three years after that splendid but dismal union.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'The lady was persuaded to marry him on terms much like those on which a Turkish princess is espoused—to whom the Sultan is reported to pronounce, "Daughter, I give thee this man for thy slave." The marriage, if uncontradicted report can be credited, made no addition to his happiness ; it neither found them, nor made them, equal. . . . Rowe's ballad of "The Despairing Shepherd" is said to have been written, either before or after marriage, upon this memorable pair.'—DR. JOHNSON.

'I received the news of Mr. Addison's being declared Secretary of State with the less surprise, in that I knew that post was almost offered to him before. At that time he declined it, and I really believe that he would have done well to have declined it now. Such a post as that, and such a wife as the Countess, do not seem to be, in prudence, eligible for a man that is asthmatic, and we may see the day when he will be heartily glad to resign them both.'—LADY WORTLEY MONTAGU to POPE. *Works*, Lord Wharnccliffe's edition, Vol. II, p. 111.

The issue of this marriage was a daughter, Charlotte Addison, who inherited, on her mother's death, the estate of Bilton, near Rugby, which her father had purchased, and died, unmarried, at an advanced age. She was of weak intellect.

Rowe appears to have been faithful to Addison during his courtship, for his *Collection* contains 'Stanzas to Lady Warwick, on Mr. Addison's going to Ireland', in which her ladyship is called 'Chloe', and Joseph Addison, 'Lycidas' ; besides the ballad mentioned by the Doctor, and which is entitled 'Colin's Complaint'. But not even the interest attached to the name of Addison could induce the reader to peruse this composition, though one stanza may serve as a specimen :—

What though I have skill to complain—  
Though the Muses my temples have crowned ;  
What though, when they hear my sweet strain,  
The Muses sit weeping around.  
Ah, Colin ! thy hopes are in vain ;  
Thy pipe and thy laurel resign ;



But it is not for his reputation as the great author of *Cato* and the *Campaign*, or for his merits as Secretary of State, or for his rank and high distinction as my Lady Warwick's husband, or for his eminence as an Examiner of political questions on the Whig side, or a Guardian of British liberties, that we admire Joseph Addison. It is as a *Tatler* of small talk and a *Spectator* of mankind, that we cherish and love him, and owe as much pleasure to him as to any human being that ever wrote. He came in that artificial age, and began to speak with his noble, natural voice. He came, the gentle satirist, who hit no unfair blow; the kind judge who castigated only in smiling. While Swift went about, hanging and ruthless—a literary Jeffries<sup>1</sup>—in Addison's kind court only minor cases were tried: only peccadilloes and small sins against society: only a dangerous libertinism in tuckers and hoops;<sup>2</sup> or a nuisance in the abuse of beaux' canes and snuff-boxes. It may be a lady is tried for breaking the peace of our sovereign lady Queen Anne, and ogling too dangerously from the side-box: or a Templar for beating the watch, or breaking Priscian's head: or a citizen's wife for caring too much for the puppet-show, and too little for her husband and children: every one of the little sinners brought before him is amusing, and he dismisses each with the pleasantest penalties and the most charming words of admonition.

Addison wrote his papers as gaily as if he was going out for a holiday. When Steele's *Tatler* first began his prattle, Addison, then in Ireland, caught at his friend's notion, poured in paper after paper, and contributed the stores of his mind, the sweet fruits of his reading, the delightful gleanings of his daily observation, with a wonderful profusion, and as it seemed an almost endless fecundity. He was six-and-thirty years old: full and ripe. He had not worked crop after crop from his brain, manuring hastily,

Thy false one inclines to a swain

Whose music is sweeter than thine. (Thackeray.)

<sup>1</sup> [Judge Jeffreys who went on the 'Bloody Circuit' after Monmouth's rebellion (1685).]

<sup>2</sup> One of the most humorous of these is the paper on Hoops, which, the *Spectator* tells us, particularly pleased his friend Sir Roger. No. 127. (Thackeray.)



subsoiling indifferently, cutting and sowing and cutting again, like other luckless cultivators of letters. He had not done much as yet ; a few Latin poems—graceful pro-lusions ; a polite book of travels ; a dissertation on medals, not very deep ; four acts of a tragedy, a great classical exercise ; and the *Campaign*, a large prize poem that won an enormous prize. But with his friends' discovery of the *Tatler*, Addison's calling was found, and the most delightful talker in the world began to speak. He does not go very deep : let gentlemen of a profound genius, critics accustomed to the plunge of the bathos, console themselves by thinking that he *couldn't* go very deep. There are no traces of suffering in his writing. He was so good, so honest, so healthy, so cheerfully selfish, if I must use the word. There is no deep sentiment. I doubt, until after his marriage, perhaps, whether he ever lost his night's rest or his day's tranquillity about any woman in his life :<sup>1</sup> whereas poor Dick Steele had capacity enough to melt, and to languish, and to sigh, and to cry his honest old eyes out, for a dozen. His writings do not show insight into or reverence for the love of women, which I take to be, one the consequence of the other. He walks about the world watching their pretty humours, fashions, follies, flirtations, rivalries ; and noting them with the most charming archness. He sees them in public, in the theatre, or the assembly, or the puppet-show ; or at the toy-shop higgling for gloves and lace ; or at the auction, battling together over a blue porcelain dragon, or a darling monster in Japan ; or at church, eyeing the width of their rivals' hoops, or the breadth of their laces, as they sweep down the aisles. Or he looks out of his window at the Garter in St. James's-street, at Ardelia's coach, as she blazes to the drawing-room with her coronet and six footmen ; and remembering that her father was a Turkey merchant in the city, calculates how many sponges went to purchase her earring, and how many drums of figs to build her coach-box ; or he demurely watches behind a tree in Spring Garden as Saccharissa (whom he knows under her mask)

<sup>1</sup> ' Mr. Addison has not had one epithalamium that I can hear of, and must even be reduced, like a poorer and a better poet, Spenser, to make his own.'—POPE'S *Letters*. (Thackeray.)



trips out of her chair to the alley where Sir Fopling is waiting. He sees only the public life of women. Addison was one of the most resolute club-men of his day. He passed many hours daily in those haunts. Besides drinking, which alas! is past praying for; you must know it, he owned, too, ladies, that he indulged in that odious practice of smoking. Poor fellow! He was a man's man, remember. The only woman he *did* know, he didn't write about. I take it there would not have been much humour in that story.

He likes to go and sit in the smoking-room at the Grecian, or the Devil; to pace 'Change and the Mall<sup>1</sup>—to mingle

<sup>1</sup> 'I have observed that a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure till he knows whether the writer of it be a black or a fair man, of a mild or a choleric disposition, married or a bachelor; with other particulars of a like nature, that conduce very much to the right understanding of an author. To gratify this curiosity, which is so natural to a reader, I design this paper and my next as prefatory discourses to my following writings; and shall give some account in them of the persons that are engaged in this work. As the chief trouble of compiling, digesting, and correcting will fall to my share, I must do myself the justice to open the work with my own history. . . . There runs a story in the family, that when my mother was gone with child of me about three months, she dreamt that she was brought to bed of a judge. Whether this might proceed from a lawsuit which was then depending in the family, or my father's being a justice of the peace, I cannot determine; for I am not so vain as to think it presaged any dignity that I should arrive at in my future life, though that was the interpretation which the neighbourhood put upon it. The gravity of my behaviour at my very first appearance in the world, and all the time that I sucked, seemed to favour my mother's dream; for, as she has often told me, I threw away my rattle before I was two months old, and would not make use of my coral till they had taken away the bells from it.

'As for the rest of my infancy, there being nothing in it remarkable, I shall pass it over in silence. I find that during my nonage I had the reputation of a very sullen youth, but was always the favourite of my schoolmaster, who used to say that *my parts were solid and would wear well*. I had not been long at the university before I distinguished myself by a most profound silence; for during the space of eight years, excepting in the public exercises of the college, I scarce uttered the quantity of an hundred words; and, indeed, I do not remember that I ever spoke three sentences together in my whole life. . . .

'I have passed my latter years in this city, where I am frequently seen in most public places, though there are not more than half a dozen of my select friends that know me. . . . There is no place of general resort wherein I do not often make my appearance; sometimes I am seen thrusting my head into a round of politicians at Will's, and listen-



in that great club of the world—sitting alone in it somehow : having good-will and kindness for every single man and woman in it—having need of some habit and custom binding him to some few ; never doing any man a wrong (unless it be a wrong to hint a little doubt about a man's parts, and to damn him with faint praise) ; and so he looks on the world and plays with the ceaseless humours of all of us—laughs the kindest laugh—points our neighbour's foible or eccentricity out to us with the most good-natured, smiling confidence ; and then, turning over his shoulder, whispers *our* foibles to our neighbour. What would Sir Roger de Coverley be without his follies and his charming little brain-cracks ? <sup>1</sup> If the good knight did not call out to the people sleeping in church, and say 'Amen' with such a delightful pomposity : if he did not make a speech in the assize-court *apropos de bottes*, and merely to show his dignity to Mr. Spectator : <sup>2</sup> if he did not mistake

ing with great attention to the narratives that are made in these little circular audiences. Sometimes I smoke a pipe at Child's, and whilst I seem attentive to nothing but the *Postman*, overhear the conversation of every table in the room. I appear on Tuesday night at St. James's Coffee-house ; and sometimes join the little committee of politics in the inner room, as one who comes to hear and improve. My face is likewise very well known at the Grecian, the Cocoa-tree, and in the theatres both of Drury-lane and the Haymarket. I have been taken for a merchant upon the Exchange for above these two years ; and sometimes pass for a Jew in the assembly of stock-jobbers at Jonathan's. In short, wherever I see a cluster of people, I mix with them, though I never open my lips but in my own club.

'Thus I live in the world rather as a '*Spectator*' of mankind than as one of the species ; by which means I have made myself a speculative statesman, soldier, merchant, and artizan, without ever meddling in any practical part of life. I am very well versed in the theory of a husband or a father, and can discern the errors in the economy, business, and diversions of others, better than those who are engaged in them—as standers-by discover blots which are apt to escape those who are in the game. . . . In short, I have acted, in all the parts of my life, as a looker-on, which is the character I intend to preserve in this paper.'—*Spectator*, No. 1. (Thackeray.)

<sup>1</sup> 'So effectually, indeed, did he retort on vice the mockery which had recently been directed against virtue, that, since his time, the open violation of decency has always been considered, amongst us, the sure mark of a fool.'—MACAULAY. (Thackeray.)

<sup>2</sup> 'The Court was sat before Sir Roger came ; but, notwithstanding all the justices had taken their places upon the bench, they made room for the old knight at the head of them ; who for his reputation in the



Madam Doll Tearsheet for a lady of quality in Temple Garden : if he were wiser than he is : if he had not his humour to salt his life, and were but a mere English gentleman and game-preserved—of what worth were he to us ? We love him for his vanities as much as his virtues. What is ridiculous is delightful in him : we are so fond of him because we laugh at him so. And out of that laughter, and out of that sweet weakness, and out of those harmless eccentricities and follies, and out of that touched brain, and out of that honest manhood and simplicity—we get a result of happiness, goodness, tenderness, pity, piety ; such as, if my audience will think their reading and hearing over, doctors and divines but seldom have the fortune to inspire. And why not ? Is the glory of Heaven to be sung only by gentlemen in black coats ? Must the truth be only expounded in gown and surplice, and out of those two vestments can nobody preach it ? Commend me to this dear preacher without orders—this parson in the tye-wig. When this man looks from the world, whose weaknesses he describes so benevolently, up to the Heaven which shines over us all, I can hardly fancy a human face lighted up with a more serene rapture : a human intellect thrilling with a purer love and adoration than Joseph Addison's. Listen to him : from your childhood you have known the verses : but who can hear their sacred music without love and awe ?

Soon as the evening shades prevail,  
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,

country took occasion to whisper in the judge's ear that *he was glad his lordship had met with so much good weather in his circuit*. I was listening to the proceedings of the Court with much attention, and infinitely pleased with that great appearance and solemnity which so properly accompanies such a public administration of our laws ; when, after about an hour's sitting, I observed to my great surprise, in the midst of a trial, that my friend Sir Roger was getting up to speak. I was in some pain for him, till I found he had acquitted himself of two or three sentences, with a look of much business and great intrepidity.

Upon his first rising, the Court was hushed, and a general whisper ran among the country people that *Sir Roger was up*. The speech he made was so little to the purpose, that I shall not trouble my readers with an account of it, and I believe was not so much designed by the knight himself to inform the Court, as to give him a figure in my eyes, and to keep up his credit in the country.—*Spectator*, No. 122. (Thackeray.)



And nightly to the listening earth,  
 Repeats the story of her birth ;  
 And all the stars that round her burn,  
 And all the planets in their turn,  
 Confirm the tidings as they roll,  
 And spread the truth from pole to pole.  
 What though, in solemn silence, all  
 Move round this dark terrestrial ball ;  
 What though no real voice nor sound,  
 Among their radiant orbs be found ;  
 In reason's ear they all rejoice,  
 And utter forth a glorious voice,  
 For ever singing as they shine,  
 The hand that made us is divine.

It seems to me those verses shine like the stars. They shine out of a great deep calm. When he turns to Heaven, a Sabbath comes over that man's mind : and his face lights up from it with a glory of thanks and prayer. His sense of religion stirs through his whole being. In the fields, in the town : looking at the birds in the trees : at the children in the streets : in the morning or in the moonlight : over his books in his own room : in a happy party at a country merry-making or a town assembly, good-will and peace to God's creatures, and love and awe of him who made them, fill his pure heart and shine from his kind face. If Swift's life was the most wretched, I think Addison's was one of the most enviable. A life prosperous and beautiful—a calm death—an immense fame and affection afterwards for his happy and spotless name.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Garth sent to Addison (of whom he had a very high opinion) on his death-bed, to ask him whether the Christian religion was true.'—Dr. YOUNG, *Spence's Anecdotes*.

'I have always preferred cheerfulness to mirth. The latter I consider as an act, the former as an habit of the mind. Mirth is short and transient, cheerfulness fixed and permanent. Those are often raised into the greatest transports of mirth who are subject to the greatest depression of melancholy : on the contrary, cheerfulness, though it does not give the mind such an exquisite gladness, prevents us from falling into any depths of sorrow. Mirth is like a flash of lightning that breaks through a gloom of clouds, and glitters for a moment ; cheerfulness keeps up a kind of daylight in the mind, and fills it with a steady and perpetual serenity.'—ADDISON, *Spectator*, No. 381. (Thackeray.)



# SELECTED ESSAYS OF ADDISON

## TATLER, No. 163

Idem inficeto est inficetior rure,  
Simul poemata attigit; neque idem unquam  
Aeque est beatus, ac poema cum scribit:  
Tam gaudet in se, tamque se ipse miratur.  
Nimirum idem omnes fallimur; neque est quisquam  
Quem non in aliqua re videre Suffenum  
Possis———CATUL., *de Suffeno*, xx. 14.

Suffenus has no more wit than a mere clown when he attempts to write verses; and yet he is never happier than when he is scribbling: so much does he admire himself and his compositions. And, indeed, this is the foible of every one of us; for there is no man living who is not a Suffenus in one thing or other.

### WILL'S COFFEE-HOUSE, April 24.

I YESTERDAY came hither about two hours before the company generally make their appearance, with a design to read over all the newspapers; but upon my sitting down I was accosted by Ned Softly, who saw me from a corner in the other end of the room, where I found he had been writing something. 'Mr. Bickerstaff',<sup>1</sup> says he, 'I observe by a late Paper of yours, that you and I are just of a humour; for you must know, of all impertinences, there is nothing which I so much hate as news. I never read a Gazette in my life; and never trouble my head about our armies, whether they win or lose, or in what part of the world they lie encamped.' Without giving me time to reply, he drew a paper of verses out of his pocket, telling me, 'that he had something which would entertain me more agreeably; and that he would desire my judgement upon every line, for that we had time enough before us until the company came in.'

<sup>1</sup> [Isaac Bickerstaff was the name first taken by Swift in his attack on Partridge, the Almanac-maker, and afterwards used by Steele in the *Tatler*. See above, p. 49.]



Ned Softly is a very pretty poet, and a great admirer of easy lines. Waller is his favourite: and as that admirable writer has the best and worst verses of any among our great English poets, Ned Softly has got all the bad ones without book; which he repeats upon occasion, to shew his reading, and garnish his conversation. Ned is indeed a true English reader, incapable of relishing the great and masterly strokes of this art; but wonderfully pleased with the little Gothic ornaments of epigrammatical conceits, turns, points, and quibbles; which are so frequent in the most admired of our English poets, and practised by those who want genius and strength to represent, after the manner of the ancients, simplicity in its natural beauty and perfection.

Finding myself unavoidably engaged in such a conversation, I was resolved to turn my pain into a pleasure, and to divert myself as well as I could with so very odd a fellow. 'You must understand,' says Ned, 'that the sonnet I am going to read to you was written upon a lady, who shewed me some verses of her own making, and is, perhaps, the best poet of our age. But you shall hear it.'

Upon which he began to read as follows:

*To MIRA, on her incomparable Poems.*

I

When dress'd in laurel wreaths you shine,  
And tune your soft melodious notes,  
You seem a sister of the Nine,  
Or Phoebus' self in petticoats.

II

I fancy, when your song you sing,  
(Your song you sing with so much art)  
Your pen was pluck'd from Cupid's wing;  
For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.

'Why,' says I, 'this is a little nosegay of conceits, a very lump of salt: every verse has something in it that piques; and then the dart in the last line is certainly as pretty a sting in the tail of an epigram, for so I think your critics



call it, as ever entered into the thought of a poet.' 'Dear Mr. Bickerstaff,' says he, shaking me by the hand, 'everybody knows you to be a judge of these things; and to tell you truly, I read over Roscommon's<sup>1</sup> translation of *Horace's Art of Poetry* three several times, before I sat down to write the sonnet which I have shown you. But you shall hear it again, and pray observe every line of it; for not one of them shall pass without your approbation.

When dress'd in laurel wreaths you shine,

'That is,' says he, 'when you have your garland on; when you are writing verses.' To which I replied, 'I know your meaning: a metaphor?' 'The same,' said he, and went on.

And tune your soft melodious notes,

'Pray observe the gliding of that verse; there is scarce a consonant in it: I took care to make it run upon liquids. Give me your opinion of it.' 'Truly,' said I, 'I think it is as good as the former.' 'I am very glad to hear you say so,' says he; 'but mind the next.'

You seem a sister of the Nine,

'That is,' says he, 'you seem a sister of the Muses; for, if you look into ancient authors, you will find it was their opinion, that there were nine of them.' 'I remember it very well,' said I; 'but pray proceed.'

Or Phoebus' self in petticoats.

'Phoebus,' says he, 'was the god of poetry. These little instances, Mr. Bickerstaff, show a gentleman's reading. Then, to take off from the air of learning, which Phoebus and the Muses had given to this first stanza, you may observe, how it falls all of a sudden into the familiar; "in Petticoats!"'

Or Phoebus' self in petticoats.

<sup>1</sup> [The Earl of Roscommon, according to Dr. Johnson, 'improved taste if he did not enlarge knowledge,' by his poems. His translation of the *Art of Poetry* appeared in 1680.]



‘Let us now,’ says I, ‘enter upon the second stanza ; I find the first line is still a continuation of the metaphor.’

I fancy, when your song you sing,

‘It is very right,’ says he ; ‘but pray observe the turn of words in those two lines. I was a whole hour in adjusting of them, and have still a doubt upon me, whether in the second line it should be “Your song you sing ; or, You sing your song ?” You shall hear them both :’

I fancy, when your song you sing,  
(Your song you sing with so much art)

Or,

I fancy, when your song you sing,  
(You sing your song with so much art).

‘Truly,’ said I, ‘the turn is so natural either way, that you have made me almost giddy with it.’ ‘Dear Sir,’ said he, grasping me by the hand, ‘you have a great deal of patience ; but pray what do you think of the next verse ?’

Your pen was pluck’d from Cupid’s wing ;

‘Think ?’ says I ; ‘I think you have made Cupid look like a little goose.’ ‘That was my meaning,’ says he : ‘I think the ridicule is well enough hit off. But we come now to the last, which sums up the whole matter.

For, ah ! it wounds me like his dart.

‘Pray how do you like that ah ! doth it not make a pretty figure in that place ? Ah !—it looks as if I felt the dart, and cried out as being pricked with it.’

For, ah ! it wounds me like his dart.

‘My friend, Dick Easy,’ continued he, ‘assured me, he would rather have written that Ah ! than to have been the author of the *Æneid*. He indeed objected, that I made Mira’s pen like a quill in one of the lines, and like a dart in the other. But as to that——’ ‘Oh ! as to that,’ says I, ‘it is but supposing Cupid to be like a porcupine, and his quills and darts will be the same thing.’ He was going to



embrace me for the hint ; but half a dozen critics coming into the room, whose faces he did not like, he conveyed the sonnet into his pocket, and whispered me in the ear, ' he would shew it me again as soon as his man had written it over fair.'

## SPECTATOR, No. 329

Ire tamen restat Numa quo devenit et Ancus.

HOR. *Epist.* i. 6. 27.

It yet remains to tread the drear descent,  
Where good Pompilius, and great Ancus went.

My friend Sir Roger de Coverley told me t'other night, that he had been reading my paper upon Westminster Abbey, in which, says he, there are a great many ingenious fancies. He told me at the same time, that he observed I had promised another paper upon the tombs, and that he should be glad to go and see them with me, not having visited them since he had read history. I could not at first imagine how this came into the knight's head, till I recollected that he had been very busy all last summer upon Baker's *Chronicle*<sup>1</sup>, which he has quoted several times in his disputes with Sir Andrew Freeport since his last coming to town. Accordingly I promised to call upon him the next morning, that we might go together to the Abbey.

I found the knight under his butler's hand, who always shaves him. He was no sooner dressed than he called for a glass of the widow Trueby's water, which he told me he always drank before he went abroad. He recommended to me a dram of it at the same time, with so much heartiness, that I could not forbear drinking it. As soon as I had got it down, I found it very unpalatable ; upon which the knight, observing that I had made several wry faces, told me that he knew I should not like it at first, but that it was the best thing in the world against the stone or gravel.

I could have wished indeed that he had acquainted me with the virtues of it sooner ; but it was too late to com-

<sup>1</sup> [Sir Richard Baker (1568-1645). Author of a *Chronicle of the Kings of England from the time of the Romans' Government unto the Death of King James*, a book which was long popular with country gentlemen.]



plain, and I knew what he had done was out of good-will. Sir Roger told me further, that he looked upon it to be very good for a man whilst he stayed in town, to keep off infection, and that he got together a quantity of it upon the first news of the sickness<sup>1</sup> being at Dantzick : when of a sudden turning short to one of his servants who stood behind him, he bid him call a hackney-coach, and take care it was an elderly man that drove it.

He then resumed his discourse upon Mrs. Trueby's water, telling me that the widow Trueby was one who did more good than all the doctors and apothecaries in the country ; that she distilled every poppy that grew within five miles of her ; that she distributed her water gratis among all sorts of people : to which the knight added, that she had a very great jointure, and that the whole country would fain have it a match between him and her ; 'and truly,' says Sir Roger, 'if I had not been engaged, perhaps I could not have done better.'

His discourse was broken off by his man's telling him he had called a coach. Upon our going to it, after having cast his eye upon the wheels, he asked the coachman if his axle-tree was good ; upon the fellow's telling him he would warrant it, the knight turned to me, told me he looked like an honest man, and went in without further ceremony.

We had not gone far, when Sir Roger, popping out his head, called the coachman down from his box, and upon his presenting himself at the window, asked him if he smoked ; as I was considering what this would end in, he bid him stop by the way at any good tobacconist's, and take in a roll of their best Virginia. Nothing material happened in the remaining part of our journey, till we were set down at the west end of the Abbey.

As we went up the body of the church, the knight pointed at the trophies upon one of the new monuments, and cried out, 'A brave man, I warrant him !' Passing afterwards by Sir Cloudsly Shovel, he flung his hand that way, and cried, 'Sir Cloudsly Shovel<sup>2</sup>, a very gallant man !' As we stood before Busby's tomb, the knight uttered himself

<sup>1</sup> [i.e. the plague, of which since 1665 London had been in periodio fear.]

<sup>2</sup> [A famous admiral of the reign of Queen Anne.]



again after the same manner. 'Dr. Busby<sup>1</sup>, a great man ! he whipped my grandfather ; a very great man ! I should have gone to him myself, if I had not been a blockhead ; a very great man !'

We were immediately conducted into the little chapel on the right hand. Sir Roger planting himself at our historian's elbow, was very attentive to everything he said, particularly to the account he gave us of the lord who had cut off the king of Morocco's head. Among several other figures, he was very well pleased to see the statesman Cecil upon his knees ; and concluding them all to be great men, was conducted to the figure which represents that martyr to good housewifery, who died by the prick of a needle. Upon our interpreter's telling us that she was a maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth, the knight was very inquisitive into her name and family ; and after having regarded her finger for some time, 'I wonder,' says he, 'that Sir Richard Baker has said nothing of her in his Chronicle.'

We were then conveyed to the two coronation chairs, where my old friend, after having heard that the stone underneath the most ancient of them, which was brought from Scotland, was called Jacob's pillar, sat himself down in the chair ; and looking like the figure of an old Gothic king, asked our interpreter, what authority they had to say, that Jacob had ever been in Scotland ? The fellow, instead of returning him an answer, told him, 'that he hoped his honour would pay his forfeit.' I could observe Sir Roger a little ruffled upon being thus trepanned ; but our guide not insisting upon his demand, the knight soon recovered his good humour, and whispered in my ear, 'that if Will Wimble were with us, and saw those two chairs, it would go hard but he would get a tobacco-stopper out of one or t'other of them.'

Sir Roger, in the next place, laid his hand upon Edward the Third's sword, and leaning upon the pommel of it, gave us the whole history of the Black Prince ; concluding, that in Sir Richard Baker's opinion, Edward the Third was one of the greatest princes that ever sat upon the English throne.

<sup>1</sup> [Head Master of Westminster School, 1638. Among his pupils were Dryden, Locke, Atterbury, and Hooper.]



We were then shewn Edward the Confessor's tomb; upon which Sir Roger acquainted us, 'that he was the first who touched for the evil'; and afterwards Henry the Fourth's, upon which he shook his head, and told us 'there was fine reading in the casualties of that reign.'

Our conductor then pointed to that monument where there is the figure of one of our English kings without an head: and upon giving us to know, that the head, which was of beaten silver, had been stolen away several years since: 'Some Whig, I'll warrant you,' says Sir Roger; 'you ought to lock up your kings better; they will carry off the body too, if you don't take care.'

The glorious names of Henry the Fifth and Queen Elizabeth gave the knight great opportunities of shining, and of doing justice to Sir Richard Baker, who, as our knight observed with some surprise, had a great many kings in him, whose monuments he had not seen in the abbey.

For my own part, I could not but be pleased to see the knight show such an honest passion for the glory of his country, and such a respectful gratitude to the memory of its princes.

I must not omit, that the benevolence of my good old friend, which flows out towards every one he converses with, made him very kind to our interpreter, whom he looked upon as an extraordinary man; for which reason he shook him by the hand at parting, telling him, that he should be very glad to see him at his lodgings in Norfolk Buildings, and talk over these matters with him more at leisure.—L.

### SPECTATOR, No. 335

Respicere exemplar vitae morumque jubebo  
Doctum imitatore, et veras hinc ducere voces.

HOR. *Ars Poet.* 317.

Keep Nature's great original in view,  
And thence the living images pursue.—FRANCIS.

My friend Sir Roger de Coverley, when we last met together at the club, told me that he had a great mind to see the new tragedy with me, assuring me at the same



time, that he had not been at a play these twenty years. 'The last I saw,' said Sir Roger, 'was *The Committee*, which I should not have gone to neither, had not I been told beforehand that it was a good church of England comedy.' He then proceeded to inquire of me who this *Distressed Mother*<sup>1</sup> was; and upon hearing that she was Hector's widow, he told me that her husband was a brave man, and that when he was a school-boy he had read his life at the end of the dictionary. My friend asked me, in the next place, if there would not be some danger in coming home late, in case the Mohocks should be abroad. 'I assure you,' says he, 'I thought I had fallen into their hands last night; for I observed two or three lusty black men that followed me half way up Fleet Street, and mended their pace behind me in proportion as I put on to get away from them. You must know,' continued the knight, with a smile, 'I fancied they had a mind to *hunt* me; for I remember an honest gentleman in my neighbourhood, who was served such a trick in King Charles II's time, for which reason he has not ventured himself in town ever since. I might have shown them very good sport, had this been their design; for as I am an old fox-hunter, I should have turned and dodged, and have played them a thousand tricks they had never seen in their lives before.' Sir Roger added, that if these gentlemen had any such intention, they did not succeed very well in it; 'for I threw them out,' says he, 'at the end of Norfolk Street, where I doubled the corner, and got shelter in my lodgings before they could imagine what was become of me. However,' says the knight, 'if Captain Sentry will make one with us to-morrow night, and if you will both of you call upon me about four o'clock, that we may be at the house before it is full, I will have my own coach in readiness to attend you, for John tells me he has got the fore-wheels mended.'

The Captain, who did not fail to meet me there at the

<sup>1</sup> [The play is based on the story of Andromache, widow of Hector, and mother of Astyanax, who, after the death of her husband, was taken captive by Pyrrhus. Hermione, whose father, Menelaus, had promised her in marriage first to Orestes, and afterwards to Pyrrhus, being jealous of Andromache, endeavoured to murder her. Orestes incited the Delphians against Pyrrhus, who fell in the struggle that ensued.]



appointed hour, bid Sir Roger fear nothing, for that he had put on the same sword which he made use of at the battle of Steenkirk. Sir Roger's servants, and among the rest, my old friend the butler, had, I found, provided themselves with good oaken plants, to attend their master upon this occasion. When we had placed him in his coach, with myself at his left hand, the Captain before him, and his butler at the head of his footmen in the rear, we conveyed him in safety to the playhouse, where, after having marched up the entry in good order, the Captain and I went in with him, and seated him betwixt us in the pit. As soon as the house was full, and the candles lighted, my old friend stood up and looked about him with that pleasure, which a mind seasoned with humanity naturally feels in itself, at the sight of a multitude of people who seem pleased with one another, and partake of the same common entertainment. I could not but fancy myself, as the old man stood up in the middle of the pit, that he made a very proper centre to a tragic audience. Upon the entering of Pyrrhus, the knight told me that he did not believe the king of France himself had a better strut. I was indeed very attentive to my old friend's remarks, because I looked upon them as a piece of natural criticism; and was well pleased to hear him, at the conclusion of almost every scene, telling me that he could not imagine how the play would end. One while he appeared much concerned for Andromache, and a little while after as much for Hermione; and was extremely puzzled to think what would become of Pyrrhus.

When Sir Roger saw Andromache's obstinate refusal to her lover's importunities, he whispered me in the ear, that he was sure she would never have him; to which he added, with a more than ordinary vehemence, 'You can't imagine, Sir, what it is to have to do with a widow.' Upon Pyrrhus his threatening afterwards to leave her, the knight shook his head and muttered to himself, 'Ay, do if you can.' This part dwelt so much upon my friend's imagination, that at the close of the third act, as I was thinking of something else, he whispered in my ear, 'These widows, Sir, are the most perverse creatures in the world. But pray,' says he, 'you that are a critic, is this play according



to your dramatic rules, as you call them? Should your people in tragedy always talk to be understood? Why, there is not a single sentence in this play that I do not know the meaning of.'

The fourth act very unluckily began before I had time to give the old gentleman an answer: 'Well,' says the knight, sitting down with great satisfaction, 'I suppose we are now to see Hector's ghost.' He then renewed his attention, and, from time to time, fell a-praising the widow. He made, indeed, a little mistake as to one of her pages, whom at his first entering he took for Astyanax: but he quickly set himself right in that particular, though, at the same time, he owned he should have been very glad to have seen the little boy, 'Who,' said he, 'must needs be a very fine child by the account that is given of him.' Upon Hermione's going off with a menace to Pyrrhus, the audience gave a loud clap; to which Sir Roger added, 'On my word, a notable young baggage!'

As there was a very remarkable silence and stillness in the audience during the whole action, it was natural for them to take the opportunity of the intervals between the acts, to express their opinion of the players and of their respective parts. Sir Roger hearing a cluster of them praise Orestes, struck in with them, and told them that he thought his friend Pylades was a very sensible man; as they were afterwards applauding Pyrrhus, Sir Roger put in a second time, 'And let me tell you,' says he, 'though he speaks but little, I like the old fellow in whiskers as well as any of them.' Captain Sentry seeing two or three wags who sat near us, lean with an attentive ear towards Sir Roger, and fearing lest they should smoke the knight, plucked him by the elbow, and whispered something in his ear, that lasted till the opening of the fifth act. The knight was wonderfully attentive to the account which Orestes gives of Pyrrhus his death, and at the conclusion of it told me, it was such a bloody piece of work, that he was glad it was not done upon the stage. Seeing afterwards Orestes in his raving fit, he grew more than ordinary serious, and took occasion to moralize (in his way) upon an evil conscience, adding, that Orestes, in his madness, looked as if he saw something.



As we were the first that came into the house, so we were the last that went out of it ; being resolved to have a clear passage for our old friend, whom we did not care to venture among the justling of the crowd. Sir Roger went out fully satisfied with his entertainment, and we guarded him to his lodgings in the same manner that we brought him to the playhouse ; being highly pleased, for my own part, not only with the performance of the excellent piece which had been presented, but with the satisfaction which it had given to the good old man.—L.

### SPECTATOR, No. 517

Heu pietas ! heu prisca fides !—VIRG. *Aen.* vi. 878.

Mirroure of antient faith !

Undaunted worth ! inviolable truth !—DRYDEN.

WE last night received a piece of ill news at our club, which very sensibly afflicted every one of us. I question not but my readers themselves will be troubled at the hearing of it. To keep them no longer in suspense, Sir Roger de Coverley *is dead*. He departed this life at his house in the country, after a few weeks' sickness. Sir Andrew Freeport has a letter from one of his correspondents in those parts, that informs him the old man caught a cold at the county sessions, as he was very warmly promoting an address of his own penning, in which he succeeded according to his wishes. But this particular comes from a Whig justice of peace, who was always Sir Roger's enemy and antagonist. I have letters both from the chaplain and Captain Sentry which mention nothing of it, but are filled with many particulars to the honour of the good old man. I have likewise a letter from the butler, who took so much care of me last summer when I was at the knight's house. As my friend the butler mentions, in the simplicity of his heart, several circumstances the others have passed over in silence, I shall give my reader a copy of his letter, without any alteration or diminution.



‘HONOURED SIR,

‘Knowing that you was my old master’s good friend, I could not forbear sending you the melancholy news of his death, which has afflicted the whole country, as well as his poor servants, who loved him, I may say, better than we did our lives. I am afraid he caught his death the last county-sessions, where he would go to see justice done to a poor widow woman, and her fatherless children, that had been wronged by a neighbouring gentleman ; for you know, sir, my good master was always the poor man’s friend. Upon his coming home, the first complaint he made was, that he had lost his roast-beef stomach, not being able to touch a sirloin, which was served up according to custom ; and you know he used to take great delight in it. From that time forward he grew worse and worse, but still kept a good heart to the last. Indeed we were once in great hope of his recovery, upon a kind message that was sent him from the widow lady whom he had made love to the forty last years of his life, but this only proved a lightning before death. He has bequeathed to this lady, as a token of his love, a great pearl necklace, and a couple of silver bracelets set with jewels, which belonged to my good old lady his mother : he has bequeathed the fine white gelding, that he used to ride a hunting upon, to his chaplain, because he thought he would be kind to him, and has left you all his books. He has, moreover, bequeathed to the chaplain a very pretty tenement with good lands about it. It being a very cold day when he made his will, he left for mourning, to every man in the parish, a great frize-coat, and to every woman a black riding-hood. It was a most moving sight to see him take leave of his poor servants, commending us all for our fidelity, whilst we were not able to speak a word for weeping. As we most of us are grown grey-headed in our dear master’s service, he has left us pensions and legacies, which we may live very comfortably upon the remaining part of our days. He has bequeathed a great deal more in charity, which is not yet come to my knowledge, and it is peremptorily said in the parish, that he has left money to build a steeple to the church ; for he was heard to say some time ago that if he lived two years



longer, Coverley church should have a steeple to it. The chaplain tells everybody that he made a very good end, and never speaks of him without tears. He was buried, according to his own directions, among the family of the Coverleys, on the left hand of his father Sir Arthur. The coffin was carried by six of his tenants, and the pall held up by six of the *quorum* : the whole parish followed the corpse with heavy hearts, and in their mourning suits, the men in frize, and the women in riding-hoods. Captain Sentry, my master's nephew, has taken possession of the hall-house, and the whole estate. When my old master saw him a little before his death, he shook him by the hand, and wished him joy of the estate which was falling to him, desiring him only to make a good use of it, and to pay the several legacies, and the gifts of charity which he told him he had left as quit-rents upon the estate. The Captain truly seems a courteous man, though he says but little. He makes much of those whom my master loved, and shews great kindness to the old house-dog, that you know my poor master was so fond of. It would have gone to your heart to have heard the moans the dumb creature made on the day of my master's death. He has never joyed himself since ; no more has any of us. 'Twas the melancholiest day for the poor people that ever happened in Worcester-shire. This is all from,

‘Honoured Sir, your most sorrowful servant,

‘EDWARD BISCUIT.

‘PS. My master desired, some weeks before he died, that a book which comes up to you by the carrier, should be given to Sir Andrew Freeport, in his name.’

This letter, notwithstanding the poor butler's manner of writing it, gave us such an idea of our good old friend, that upon the reading of it there was not a dry eye in the club. Sir Andrew, opening the book, found it to be a collection of acts of parliament. There was in particular the Act of Uniformity, with some passages in it marked by Sir Roger's own hand. Sir Andrew found that they related to two or three points, which he had disputed with



Sir Roger the last time he appeared at the club. Sir Andrew, who would have been merry at such an incident on another occasion, at the sight of the old man's handwriting, burst into tears, and put the book into his pocket. Captain Sentry informs me, that the knight has left rings and mourning for every one in the club.—O.

## SPECTATOR, No. 584

Hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori,  
Hic nemus, hic toto tecum consumerer aevo.

VIRG. *Ecl.* x. ver. 42.

Come see what pleasures in our plains abound :  
The woods, the fountains, and the flow'ry ground :  
Here I could live, and love, and die with only you.' t  
DRYDEN.

HILPA was one of the hundred and fifty daughters of Zilpah, of the race of Cohu, by whom some of the learned think is meant Cain. She was exceedingly beautiful ; and when she was but a girl of threescore and ten years of age, received the addresses of several who made love to her. Among these were two brothers, Harpath and Shalum. Harpath being the firstborn, was master of that fruitful region which lies at the foot of Mount Tirzah in the southern parts of China. Shalum (which is to say the planter in the Chinese language) possessed all the neighbouring hills, and that great range of mountains which goes under the name of Tirzah. Harpath was of a haughty contemptuous spirit ; Shalum of a gentle disposition, beloved both by God and man.

It is said that among the antediluvian women the daughters of Cohu had their minds wholly set upon riches ; for which reason the beautiful Hilpa preferred Harpath to Shalum, because of his numerous flocks and herds, that covered all the low country which runs along the foot of Mount Tirzah, and is watered by several fountains and streams breaking out of the sides of that mountain.

Harpath made so quick a dispatch of his courtship, that he married Hilpa in the hundredth year of her age ; and



being of an insolent temper, laughed to scorn his brother Shalum for having pretended to the beautiful Hilpa, when he was master of nothing but a long chain of rocks and mountains. This so much provoked Shalum, that he is said to have cursed his brother in the bitterness of his heart, and to have prayed that one of his mountains might fall upon his head if ever he came within the shadow of it.

From this time forward Harpath would never venture out of the valleys ; but came to an untimely end in the two hundred and fiftieth year of his age, being drowned in a river as he attempted to cross it. This river is called to this day, from his name who perished in it, the river Harpath ; and what is very remarkable, issues out of one of those mountains which Shalum wished might fall upon his brother when he cursed him in the bitterness of his heart.

Hilpa was in the hundred and sixtieth year of her age at the death of her husband, having brought him but fifty children before he was snatched away, as has been already related. Many of the antediluvians made love to the young widow, though no one was thought so likely to succeed in her affections as her first lover Shalum, who renewed his court to her about ten years after the death of Harpath ; for it was not thought decent in those days that a widow should be seen by a man within ten years after the decease of her husband.

Shalum falling into a deep melancholy, and resolving to take away that objection which had been raised against him when he made his first addresses to Hilpa, began, immediately after her marriage with Harpath, to plant all that mountainous region which fell to his lot in the division of this country. He knew how to adapt every plant to its proper soil, and is thought to have inherited many traditional secrets of that art from the first man. This employment turned at length to his profit as well as to his amusement. His mountains were in a few years shaded with young trees, that gradually shot up into groves, woods, and forests, intermixed with walks, and lawns, and gardens ; insomuch that the whole region, from a naked and desolate prospect, began now to look like a second Paradise. The pleasantness of the place, and the agreeable disposition of

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Shalum, who was reckoned one of the mildest and wisest of all who lived before the flood, drew into it multitudes of people, who were perpetually employed in the sinking of wells, the digging of trenches, and the hollowing of trees, for the better distribution of water through every part of this spacious plantation.

The habitations of Shalum looked every year more beautiful in the eyes of Hilpa, who, after the space of seventy autumns, was wonderfully pleased with the distant prospect of Shalum's hills, which were then covered with innumerable tufts of trees, and gloomy scenes, that gave a magnificence to the place, and converted it into one of the finest landscapes the eye of man could behold.

The Chinese record a letter which Shalum is said to have written to Hilpa in the eleventh year of her widowhood. I shall here translate it, without departing from that noble simplicity of sentiments and plainness of manners which appear in the original.

Shalum was at this time one hundred and eighty years old, and Hilpa one hundred and seventy.

SHALUM, *Master of Mount Tirzah, to HILPA, Mistress of the Vallies.*

‘ In the 788 year of the creation.

‘ What have I not suffered, O thou daughter of Zilpah, since thou gavest thyself away in marriage to my rival ? I grew weary of the light of the sun, and have been ever since covering myself with woods and forests. These threescore and ten years have I bewailed the loss of thee on the top of Mount Tirzah, and soothed my melancholy among a thousand gloomy shades of my own raising. My dwellings are at present as the garden of God ; every part of them is filled with fruits and flowers, and fountains. The whole mountain is perfumed for thy reception. Come up into it, O my beloved ! and let us people this spot of the new world with a beautiful race of mortals ; let us multiply exceedingly among these delightful shades, and fill every quarter of them with sons and daughters. Remember, O thou daughter of Zilpah ! that the age of man is but a thousand years ; that beauty is the admiration but of



a few centuries : It flourishes as a mountain oak, or as a cedar on the top of Tirzah, which in three or four hundred years will fade away, and never be thought of by posterity, unless a young wood springs from its roots. Think well on this, and remember thy neighbour in the mountains.'

Having here inserted this letter, which I look upon as the only antediluvian billet-doux now extant, I shall in my next paper give the answer to it, and the sequel of this story.

### SPECTATOR, No. 585

Ipsi laetitia voces ad sidera jactant  
Intonsi montes : ipsae jam carmina rupes,  
Ipsa sonant arbusta.—VIRG. *Eccl.* v. ver. 63.

The mountain-tops unshorn, the rocks rejoice ;  
The lowly shrubs partake of human voice.

DRYDEN.

### THE SEQUEL OF THE STORY OF SHALUM AND HILPA.

THE letter inserted in my last had so good an effect upon Hilpa, that she answered it in less than a twelvemonth, after the following manner :

HILPA, *Mistress of the Vallies*, to SHALUM, *Master of Mount Tirzah*.

'In the 789th year of the Creation.

'What have I to do with thee, O Shalum ? Thou praisest Hilpa's beauty ; but art thou not secretly enamoured with the verdure of her meadows ? Art thou not more affected with the prospect of her green vallies, than thou wouldst be with the sight of her person ? The lowings of my herds, and the bleatings of my flocks, make a pleasant echo in thy mountains, and sound sweetly in thy ears. What though I am delighted with the wavings of thy forests, and those breezes of perfumes which flow from the top of Tirzah ; are these like the riches of the valley ?



‘ I know thee, O Shalum ; thou art more wise and happy than any of the sons of men : Thy dwellings are among the cedars ; thou searchest out the diversity of soils ; thou understandest the influences of the stars, and markest the change of seasons. Can a woman appear lovely in the eyes of such a one ? Disquiet me not, O Shalum ; let me alone, that I may enjoy those goodly possessions that are fallen to my lot. Win me not by thy enticing words. May thy trees increase and multiply ; mayst thou add wood to wood, and shade to shade ; but tempt not Hilpa to destroy thy solitude, and make thy retirement populous.’

The Chinese say, that a little time afterwards she accepted of a treat in one of the neighbouring hills, to which Shalum had invited her. This treat lasted for two years, and is said to have cost Shalum five hundred antelopes, two thousand ostriches, and a thousand tons of milk ; but what most of all recommended it, was that variety of delicious fruits and pot-herbs, in which no person then living could any way equal Shalum.

He treated her in the bower which he had planted amidst the wood of nightingales. This wood was made up of such fruit-trees and plants as are most agreeable to the several kinds of singing-birds ; so that it had drawn into it all the music of the country, and was filled from one end of the year to the other with the most agreeable concert in season.

He shewed her every day some beautiful and surprising scene in this new region of woodlands ; and as by this means he had all the opportunities he could wish for opening his mind to her, he succeeded so well, that upon her departure she made him a kind of promise, and gave him her word to return him a positive answer in less than fifty years.

She had not been long among her own people in the vallies when she received new overtures, and at the same time a most splendid visit from Mishpach, who was a mighty man of old, and had built a great city, which he called after his own name. Every house was made for at least a thousand years ; nay there were some that were leased out for three lives : so that the quantity of stone and timber consumed in this building is scarce to be imagined by those who live in the present age of the world.



This great man entertained her with the voice of musical instruments which had been lately invented, and danced before her to the sound of the timbrel. He also presented her with several domestic utensils wrought in brass and iron, which had been newly found out, for the conveniency of life. In the meantime Shalum grew very uneasy with himself, and was sorely displeased with Hilpa for the reception which she had given to Mishpach; insomuch that he never wrote to her or spoke of her during a whole revolution of Saturn: but finding that this intercourse went no further than a visit, he again renewed his addresses to her, who during his long silence is said very often to have cast a wishing eye upon Mount Tirzah.

Her mind continued wavering about twenty years longer between Shalum and Mishpach; for though her inclinations favoured the former, her interest pleaded very powerfully for the other. While her heart was in this unsettled condition, the following accident happened, which determined her choice. A high tower of wood that stood in the city of Mishpach having caught fire by a flash of lightning, in a few days reduced the whole town to ashes. Mishpach resolved to rebuild the place, whatever it should cost him; and having already destroyed all the timber of the country, he was forced to have recourse to Shalum, whose forests were now two hundred years old. He purchased these woods with so many herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, and with such a vast extent of fields and pastures, that Shalum was now grown more wealthy than Mishpach; and therefore appeared so charming in the eyes of Zilpah's daughter, that she no longer refused him in marriage. On the day in which he brought her up into the mountains, he raised a most prodigious pile of cedar, and of every sweet-smelling wood, which reached above three hundred cubits in height: he also cast into the pile bundles of myrrh and sheaves of spikenard, enriching it with every spicy shrub, and making it fat with the gums of his plantations. This was the burnt-offering which Shalum offered in the day of his espousals: the smoke of it ascended up to Heaven, and filled the whole country with incense and perfume.



## SPECTATOR, No. 323

Modo vir, modo faemina.—VIRG.

Sometimes a man, sometimes a woman.

THE journal with which I presented my reader on Tuesday last has brought me in several letters, with accounts of many private lives cast into that form. I have the *Rake's Journal*, the *Sot's Journal*, the *Whoremaster's Journal*; and among several others, a very curious piece, intituled, *The Journal of a Mohock*. By these instances I find that the intention of my last Tuesday's paper has been mistaken by many of my readers. I did not design so much to expose vice as idleness, and aimed at those persons who pass away their time rather in trifles and impertinence, than in crimes and immoralities. Offences of this latter kind are not to be dallied with, or treated in so ludicrous a manner. In short, my journal only holds up folly to the light, and shews the disagreeableness of such actions as are indifferent in themselves, and blameable only as they proceed from creatures endowed with reason.

My following correspondent, who calls herself Clarinda, is such a journalist as I require. She seems by her letter to be placed in a modish state of indifference between vice and virtue, and to be susceptible of either, were there proper pains taken with her. Had her journal been filled with gallantries, or such occurrences as had shewn her wholly divested of her natural innocence, notwithstanding it might have been more pleasing to the generality of readers, I should not have published it; but as it is only the picture of a life filled with a fashionable kind of gaiety and laziness, I shall set down five days of it, as I have received it from the hand of my fair correspondent.

' DEAR MR. SPECTATOR,

' You have set your readers an exercise in one of your last week's Papers; I have performed mine according to your orders, and herewith send it you inclosed. You must know, Mr. Spectator, that I am a maiden lady of a good



fortune, who have had several matches offered me for these ten years last past, and have at present warm applications made to me by a very pretty fellow. As I am at my own disposal, I come up to town every winter, and pass my time in it after the manner you will find in the following journal, which I began to write upon the very day after your *Spectator* upon that subject.'

TUESDAY night. Could not go to sleep till one in the morning for thinking of my journal.

WEDNESDAY. From eight till ten. Drank two dishes of chocolate in bed, and fell asleep after them.

From ten to eleven. Eat a slice of bread and butter. Drank a dish of bohea. Read the *Spectator*.

From eleven to one. At my toilette. Tried a new hood. Gave orders for Veny to be combed and washed. Mem. I look best in blue.

From one till half an hour after two. Drove to the 'Change. Cheapened a couple of fans.

Till four. At dinner. Mem. Mr. Froth passed by in his new liveries.

From four to six. Dressed. Paid a visit to old lady Blithe and her sister, having before heard they were gone out of the town that day.

From six to eleven. At Basset. Mem. Never set again upon the ace of diamonds.

THURSDAY. From eleven at night to eight in the morning. Dreamed that I punted to Mr. Froth.

From eight to ten. Chocolate. Read two acts in *Aurengzebe*<sup>1</sup> a-bed.

From ten to eleven. Tea-table. Sent to borrow lady Faddle's Cupid for Veny. Read the play bills. Received a letter from Mr. Froth. Locked it up in my strong box.

Rest of the morning. Fontange. The tire-woman. Her account of my lady Blithe's wash. Broke a tooth in my little tortoise-shell comb. Sent Frank to know how my lady Hectick rested after her monkey's leaping out at the window. Looked pale. Fontange tells me my glass is not true. Dressed by three.

From three to four. Dinner cold before I sat down.

<sup>1</sup> [A tragedy by Dryden.]



From four to eleven. Saw company. Mr. Froth's opinion of Milton. His account of the Mohocks. His fancy for a pin-cushion. Picture in the lid of his snuff-box. Old lady Faddle promises me her woman to cut my hair. Lost five guineas at crimp.

Twelve o'clock at night. Went to bed.

FRIDAY. Eight in the morning. A-bed. Read over all Mr. Froth's letters. Cupid and Veny.

Ten o'clock. Stayed within all day ; not at home.

From ten to twelve. In conference with my mantua-maker. Sorted a suit of ribbons. Broke my blue china cup.

From twelve to one. Shut myself up in my chamber. Practised lady Betty Modley's skuttle.

One in the afternoon. Called for my flowered handkerchief : Worked half a violet leaf in it. Eyes ached, and head out of order. Threw by my work, and read over the remaining part of *Aurengzebe*.

From three to four. Dined.

From four to twelve. Changed my mind ; dressed, went abroad, and played at crimp till midnight. Found Mrs. Spitely at home. Conversation. Mrs. Brilliant's necklace false stones. Old lady Loveday going to be married to a young fellow that is not worth a groat. Miss Prue gone into the country. Tom Townley has red hair. Mem. Mrs. Spitely whispered in my ear that she had something to tell me about Mr. Froth. I am sure it is not true.

Between twelve and one. Dreamed that Mr. Froth lay at my feet, and called me Indamora.

SATURDAY. Rose at eight o'clock in the morning. Sat down to my toilette.

From eight to nine. Shifted a patch for an hour before I could determine it. Fixed it above my left eye-brow.

From nine to twelve. Drank my tea, and dressed.

From twelve to two. At chapel. A great deal of good company. Mem. The third air in the new opera. Lady Blithe dressed frightfully.

From three to four. Dined. Miss Kitty called upon me to go to the opera before I was risen from table.



From dinner to six. Drank tea. Turned off a footman for being rude to Veny.

Six o'clock. Went to the opera. I did not see Mr. Froth till the beginning of the second act. Mr. Froth talked to a gentleman in a black wig. Bowed to a lady in the front box. Mr. Froth and his friend clapped Nicolini in the third act. Mr. Froth cried Encore. Mr. Froth led me to my chair. I think he squeezed my hand.

Eleven at night. Went to bed. Melancholy dreams. Methought Nicolini said he was Mr. Froth.

SUNDAY.—Indisposed.

MONDAY. Eight o'clock. Waked by Miss Kitty. *Aurengzebe* lay upon the chair by me. Kitty repeated without book the eight best lines in the play. Went in our mobbs to the dumb man according to appointment. Told me that my lover's name began with a G. Mem. The conjurer was within a letter of Mr. Froth's name, &c.

' Upon looking back into this my journal, I find that I am at a loss to know whether I pass my time well or ill ; and indeed never thought of considering how I did it before I perused your speculation upon that subject. I scarce find a single action in these five days that I can thoroughly approve of, except the working upon the violet leaf, which I am resolved to finish the first day I am at leisure. As for Mr. Froth and Veny, I did not think they took up so much of my time and thoughts, as I find they do upon my journal. The latter of them I will turn off, if you insist upon it ; and if Mr. Froth does not bring matters to a conclusion very suddenly, I will not let my life run away in a dream.

' Your humble servant,

' CLARINDA.'

To resume one of the morals of my first Paper, and to confirm Clarinda in her good inclinations, I would have her consider what a pretty figure she would make among posterity, were the history of her whole life published like these five days of it. I shall conclude my Paper with an epitaph written by an uncertain author on Sir Philip



Sidney's sister, a lady who seems to have been of a temper very much different from that of Clarinda. The last thought of it is so very noble, that I dare say my reader will pardon me the quotation.

ON THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF PEMBROKE.

Underneath this marble hearse  
Lies the subject of all verse,  
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother :  
Death, e'er thou hast killed another,  
Fair and learned, and good as she,  
Time shall throw a dart at thee.<sup>1</sup>

GUARDIAN, No. 98

In sese redit.—VIRG. *Georg.* 4. ver. 444.

He resumes himself.

THE first who undertook to instruct the world in single papers, was Isaac Bickerstaff of famous memory ; a man nearly related to the family of the Ironsides. We have often smoked a pipe together ; for I was so much in his books, that at his decease he left me a silver standish, a pair of spectacles, and the lamp by which he used to write his lucubrations.

The venerable Isaac was succeeded by a gentleman of the same family, very memorable for the shortness of his face and of his speeches. This ingenious author published his thoughts and held his tongue with great applause for two years together.

I Nestor Ironside have now for some time undertaken to fill the place of these my two renowned kinsmen and predecessors : For it is observed of every branch of our family, that we have all of us a wonderful inclination to give good advice ; though it is remarked of some of us, that we are apt on this occasion rather to give than take.

However it be, I cannot but observe with some secret pride, that this way of writing diurnal papers has not

<sup>1</sup> [Usually attributed to William Browne.]



succeeded for any space of time in the hands of any persons who are not of our line. I believe I speak within compass, when I affirm that above a hundred different authors have endeavoured after our family-way of writing; some of which have been writers in other kinds of the greatest eminence in the kingdom: But I do not know how it has happened, they have none of them hit upon the art. Their projects have always dropt after a few unsuccessful essays. It puts me in mind of a story which was lately told me of a pleasant friend of mine, who has a very fine hand on the violin. His maid-servant seeing his instrument lying upon the table, and being sensible there was music in it, if she knew how to fetch it out, drew the bow over every part of the strings, and at last told her master, she had tried the fiddle all over, but could not for her heart find whereabout the tune lay.

But though the whole burden of such a paper is only fit to rest on the shoulders of a Bickerstaff<sup>1</sup>, or an Ironside, there are several who can acquit themselves of a single day's labour in it with suitable abilities. These are gentlemen whom I have often invited to this trial of wit, and who have several of them acquitted themselves to my private emolument, as well as to their own reputation. My Paper among the republic of letters is the Ulysses his bow, in which every man of wit or learning may try his strength. One who does not care to write a book without being sure of his abilities, may see by this means if his parts and talents are to the public taste.

This I take to be of great advantage to men of the best sense, who are always diffident of their private judgement, till it receives a sanction from the public. *Provoco ad populum*, 'I appeal to the people,' was the usual saying of a very excellent dramatic poet, when he had any disputes with particular persons about the justness and regularity of his productions. It is but a melancholy comfort for an author, to be satisfied that he has written up to the rules of art, when he finds he has no admirers in the world besides himself. Common modesty should on this occasion make a man suspect his own judgement, and that he mis-

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. p. 107, note 1.]



applies the rules of his art, when he finds himself singular in the applause which he bestows upon his own writings.

The public is always even with an author who has not a just deference for them. The attempt is reciprocal. 'I laugh at every one,' said an old Cynic, 'who laughs at me.' 'Do you so,' replied the philosopher; 'then let me tell you, you live the merriest life of any man in Athens.'

It is not therefore the least use of this my paper, that it gives a timorous writer, and such is every good one, an opportunity of putting his abilities to the proof, and of sounding the public before he launches into it. For this reason, I look upon my paper as a kind of nursery for authors; and question not but some who have made a good figure here, will hereafter flourish under their own names in more long and elaborate works.

After having thus far enlarged upon this particular, I have one favour to beg of the candid and courteous reader, that when he meets with anything in this paper which may appear a little dull and heavy (though I hope this will not be often), he will believe it is the work of some other person, and not of Nestor Ironside.

I have, I know not how, been drawn in to tattle of myself, *more majorum*, almost the length of a whole *Guardian*. I shall therefore fill up the remaining part of it with what still relates to my own person, and my correspondents. Now, I would have them all know, that on the twentieth instant it is my intention to erect a lion's head, in imitation of those I have described in Venice, through which all the private intelligence of that commonwealth is said to pass. This head is to open a most wide and voracious mouth, which shall take in such letters and papers as are conveyed to me by my correspondents; it being my resolution to have a particular regard to all such matters as come to my hands through the mouth of the lion. There will be under it a box, of which the key will be kept in my own custody, to receive such papers as are dropped into it. Whatever the lion swallows, I shall digest for the use of the public. This head requires some time to finish, the workmen being resolved to give it several masterly touches, and to represent it as ravenous as possible. It will be set up in Button's coffee-house in



Covent-garden, who is directed to shew the way to the lion's head, and to instruct any young author how to convey his works into the mouth of it with safety and secrecy.

GUARDIAN, No. 155

Libelli Stoici inter sericos  
Iacere pulvillos amant.—HOR. *Epod.* 8. ver. 15.

The books of Stoics ever chose  
On silken cushions to repose.

I HAVE often wondered, that learning is not thought a proper ingredient in the education of a woman of quality or fortune. Since they have the same improveable minds as the male part of the species, why should they not be cultivated by the same method? why should reason be left to itself in one of the sexes, and be disciplined with so much care in the other?

There are some reasons why learning seems more adapted to the female world than to the male. As, in the first place, because they have more spare time upon their hands, and lead a more sedentary life. Their employments are of a domestic nature, and not like those of the other sex, which are often inconsistent with study and contemplation. The excellent lady, the Lady Lizard, in the space of one summer, furnished a gallery with chairs and couches of her own and her daughters' working; and at the same time heard all Dr. Tillotson's<sup>1</sup> sermons twice over. It is always the custom for one of the young ladies to read while the others are at work; so that the learning of the family is not at all prejudicial to its manufactures. I was mightily pleased the other day to find them all busy in preserving several fruits of the season, with the Sparkler in the midst of them reading over *the plurality of worlds*. It was very entertaining to me to see them dividing their speculations between jellies and stars, and making a sudden transition from the sun to an apricot, or from the Copernican<sup>2</sup> system to the figure of a cheesecake.

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. p. 5, note 1.]

<sup>2</sup> [Copernicus (1473–1543) first discovered that the earth went round the sun.]



A second reason why women should apply themselves to useful knowledge rather than men, is, because they have that natural gift of speech in greater perfection. Since they have so excellent a talent, such a *copia verborum*, or plenty of words, it is pity they should not put it to some use. If the female tongue will be in motion, why should it not be set to go right? Could they discourse about the spots in the sun, it might divert them from publishing the faults of their neighbours; could they talk of the different aspects and conjunctions of the planets, they need not be at the pains to comment upon oglings and clandestine marriages; in short, were they furnished with matters of fact out of the arts and sciences, it would now and then be of great ease to their invention.

There is another reason why those especially who are women of quality should apply themselves to letters; namely, because their husbands are generally strangers to them.

It is a great pity there should be no knowledge in a family. For my own part, I am concerned when I go into a great house, where perhaps there is not a single person that can spell, unless it be by chance the butler, or one of the footmen. What a figure is the young heir likely to make, who is a dunce both by father and mother's side?

If we look into the histories of famous women, we find many eminent philosophers of this sex; nay, we find that several females have distinguished themselves in those sects of philosophy which seem almost repugnant to their natures. There have been famous female Pythagoreans<sup>1</sup>, notwithstanding most of that philosophy consisted in keeping a secret, and that the disciple was to hold her tongue five years together. I need not mention Portia<sup>2</sup>, who was a Stoic in petticoats; nor Hipparchia<sup>3</sup> the famous she Cynic, who arrived at such perfection in her studies,

<sup>1</sup> [Followers of the Greek philosopher Pythagoras, who taught the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and who founded an ascetic brotherhood for the study of religion and philosophy.]

<sup>2</sup> [The wife of Brutus. The story of her wounding herself is used by Shakespeare in *Julius Caesar*, ii. 1.]

<sup>3</sup> [A noble lady of Thrace, who insisted on marrying Crates, the deformed Cynic philosopher, much against the will of her friends.]



that she conversed with her husband or man-planter in broad day-light and in the open streets.

Learning and knowledge are perfections in us, not as we are men, but as we are reasonable creatures; in which order of beings the female world is upon the same level with the male. We ought to consider in this particular, not what is the sex, but what is the species to which they belong. At least I believe every one will allow me, that a female philosopher is not so absurd a character and so opposite to the sex, as a female gamester; and that it is more irrational for a woman to pass away half a dozen hours at card or dice than in getting up stores of useful learning. This therefore is another reason why I would recommend the studies of knowledge to the female world, that they may not be at a loss how to employ those hours that lie upon their hands.

I might also add this motive to my fair readers, that several of their sex who have improved their minds by books and literature, have raised themselves to the highest posts of honour and fortune. A neighbouring nation may at this time furnish us with a very remarkable instance of this kind; but I shall conclude this head with the history of Athenais, which is a very signal example to my present purpose.

The emperor Theodosius<sup>1</sup> being about the age of one-and-twenty, and designing to take a wife, desired his sister Pulcheria and his friend Paulinus to search his whole empire for a woman of the most exquisite beauty and highest accomplishments. In the midst of this search Athenais, a Grecian virgin, accidentally offered herself. Her father, who was an eminent philosopher of Athens, and had bred her up in all the learning of that place, at his death left her but a small portion, in which also she suffered great hardships from the injustice of her two brothers. This forced her upon a journey to Constantinople; where she had a relation who represented her case to Pulcheria, in order to obtain some redress from the emperor. By this means that religious princess became

<sup>1</sup> [Theodosius II, A.D. 408-450. His sister, Pulcheria, for some years acted as regent, and always retained great influence over the government.]



acquainted with Athenais, whom she found the most beautiful woman of her age, and educated, under a long course of philosophy, in the strictest virtue and most unspotted innocence. Pulcheria was charmed with her conversation, and immediately made her reports to the emperor her brother Theodosius. The character she gave made such an impression on him, that he desired his sister to bring her away immediately to the lodgings of his friend Paulinus, where he found her beauty and her conversation beyond the highest idea he had framed of them. His friend Paulinus converted her to Christianity, and gave her the name of Eudisia. After which the emperor publicly espoused her, and enjoyed all the happiness in his marriage which he promised himself from such a virtuous and learned bride. She not only forgave the injuries which her two brothers had done her, but raised them to great honours; and by several works of learning, as well as by an exemplary life, made herself so dear to the whole empire, that she had many statues erected to her memory, and is celebrated by the fathers of the church as the ornament of her sex.

### FREEHOLDER, No. 22

*Studiis rudis, sermone barbarus, impetu strenuus, manu promptus, cogitatione celer.*—VEL. PATERC.

Unpolitely educated, expressing himself in vulgar language, boisterous, eager at a fray, and over hasty in taking up an opinion.

FOR the honour of his Majesty, and the safety of his government, we cannot but observe, that those who have appeared the greatest enemies to both, are of that rank of men who are commonly distinguished by the title of Fox-hunters. As several of these have had no part of their education in cities, camps, or courts, it is doubtful whether they are of greater ornament or use to the nation in which they live. It would be an everlasting reproach to politics, should such men be able to overturn an establishment which has been formed by the wisest laws, and is supported by the ablest heads. The wrong notions and prejudices which cleave to many of these country-gentle-



men, who have always lived out of the way of being better informed, are not easy to be conceived by a person who has never conversed with them.

That I may give my readers an image of these rural statesmen, I shall, without farther preface, set down an account of a discourse I chanced to have with one of them some time ago. I was travelling towards one of the remotest parts of England; when, about three o'clock in the afternoon, feeling a country-gentleman trotting before me with a spaniel by his horse's side, I made up to him. Our conversation opened, as usual, upon the weather; in which we were very unanimous, having both agreed that it was too dry for the season of year. My fellow-traveller, upon this, observed to me, there had been no good weather since the Revolution. I was a little startled at so extraordinary a remark; but would not interrupt him till he proceeded to tell me of the fine weather they used to have in King Charles the Second's reign. I only answered, that I did not see how the badness of the weather could be the King's fault; and, without waiting for his reply, asked him, whose house it was we saw upon a rising ground at a little distance from us. He told me it belonged to an old fanatical cur, Mr. such-a-one. 'You must have heard of him,' says he, 'he is one of the rump.' I knew the gentleman's character upon hearing his name; but assured him, that to my knowledge he was a good churchman. 'Ay!' says he with a kind of surprise, 'we are told in the country, that he spoke twice in the Queen's time against taking off the duties upon French claret.' This naturally led us into the proceedings of late Parliaments; upon which occasion he affirmed roundly, that there had not been one good law passed since King William's accession to the throne, except the act for preserving the game. I had a mind to see him out, and therefore did not care for contradicting him. 'Is it not hard,' says he, 'that honest gentlemen should be taken into custody of messengers to prevent them from acting according to their consciences? But,' says he, 'what can we expect when a parcel of factious sons of whores'—He was going on in a great passion; but chanced to miss his dog, who was amusing himself about a bush that grew at some distance



behind us. We stood still until he had whistled him up ; when he fell into a long panegyric upon his spaniel, who seemed indeed excellent in his kind : But I found the most remarkable adventure of his life was, that he had once like to have worried a dissenting-teacher. The master could hardly sit on his horse for laughing all the while he was giving me the particulars of this story, which I found had mightily endeared his dog to him, and, as he himself told me, had made him a great favourite among all the honest gentlemen of the country. We were at length diverted from this piece of mirth by a post-boy, who, winding his horn at us, my companion gave him two or three curses, and left the way clear for him. ‘ I fancy,’ said I, ‘ that post brings news from Scotland. I shall long to see the next *Gazette*.’ ‘ Sir,’ says he, ‘ I make it a rule never to believe any of your printed news. We never see, Sir, how things go, except now and then in Dyer’s *Letter*<sup>1</sup>, and I read that more for the stile than the news. The man has a clever pen, it must be owned. But is it not strange that we should be making war upon Church of England men with Dutch and Swiss soldiers, men of antimonarchical principles? These foreigners will never be loved in England, Sir ; they have not that wit and good breeding that we have.’ I must confess, I did not expect to hear my new acquaintance value himself upon these qualifications ; but finding him such a critic upon foreigners, I asked him, if he had ever travelled ? He told me, he did not know what travelling was good for, but to teach a man to ride the great horse, to jabber French, and to talk against passive obedience : To which he added, that he scarce ever knew a Traveller in his life who had not forsook his principles, and lost his hunting-seat. ‘ For my part,’ says he, ‘ I and my father before me have always been for passive obedience, and shall be always for opposing a Prince who makes use of Ministers that are of another opinion. But where do you intend to inn to-night ? (for we were now come in sight of the next town) I can help you to a very good landlord, if you will go along with me. He is a lusty jolly fellow, that lives well, at least three yards in the girth, and the best Church of England man upon the road.’ I had the

<sup>1</sup> [A weekly news-sheet which was much read by country squires.]



curiosity to see this high-church inn-keeper, as well as to enjoy more of the conversation of my fellow-traveller; and therefore readily consented to set our horses together for that night. As we rode side by side through the town, I was let into the characters of all the principal inhabitants whom we met in our way. One was a dog, another a whelp, another a cur, and another the son of a bitch; under which several denominations were comprehended all that voted on the Whig side in the last election of burgesses. As for those of his own party, he distinguished them by a nod of his head, and asked them how they did by their Christian names. Upon our arrival at the inn, my companion fetched out the jolly landlord, who knew him by his whistle. Many endearments and private whispers passed between them; though it was easy to see, by the landlord's scratching his head, that things did not go to their wishes. The landlord had swelled his body to a prodigious size, and worked up his complexion to such a standing crimson by his zeal for the prosperity of the Church, which he expressed every hour of the day, as his customers dropped in, by repeated bumpers. He had not time to go to church himself; but, as my friend told me in my ear, had headed a mob at the pulling down of two or three meeting-houses. While supper was preparing, he enlarged upon the happiness of the neighbouring shire; 'for,' says he, 'there is scarce a Presbyterian in the whole country, except the Bishop.' In short, I found by his discourse that he had learned a great deal of politics, but not one word of religion, from the Parson of his parish; and indeed, that he had scarce any other notion of religion, but that it consisted in hating Presbyterians. I had a remarkable instance of his notions in this particular. Upon seeing a poor decrepit old woman pass under the window where he sat, he desired me to take notice of her; and afterwards informed me, that she was generally reputed a witch by the country people; but that, for his part, he was apt to believe, she was a Presbyterian.

Supper was no sooner served in, than he took occasion, from a shoulder of mutton that lay before us, to cry up the plenty of England, which would be the happiest country in the world, provided we would live within ourselves. Upon



which he expatiated upon the inconveniences of trade, that carried from us the commodities of our country, and made a parcel of upstarts as rich as men of the most ancient families of England. He then declared frankly, that he had always been against all treaties and alliances with foreigners. 'Our wooden walls,' says he, 'are our security; and we may bid defiance to the whole world, especially if they should attack us when the militia is out.' I ventured to reply, that I had as great an opinion of the English fleet as he had; but I could not see how they could be paid, and manned, and fitted out, unless we encouraged trade and navigation. He replied, with some vehemence, that he would undertake to prove trade would be the ruin of the English nation. I would fain have put him upon it; but he contented himself with affirming it more eagerly; to which he added two or three curses upon the London merchants, not forgetting the directors of the bank. After supper, he asked me, if I was an admirer of punch; and immediately called for a sneaker<sup>1</sup>. I took this occasion to insinuate the advantages of trade, by observing to him, that water was the only native of England that could be made use of on this occasion: But that the lemons, the brandy, the sugar, and the nutmeg, were all foreigners. This put him into some confusion; but the landlord, who overheard me, brought him off, by affirming, that for constant use there was no liquor like a cup of English water, provided it had malt enough in it. My squire laughed heartily at the conceit, and made the landlord sit down with us. We sat pretty late over our punch; and amidst a great deal of improving discourse, drank the healths of several persons in the country, whom I had never heard of, that they both assured me, were the ablest statesmen in the nation: And of some Londoners, whom they extolled to the skies for their wit, and who, I knew, passed in town for silly fellows. It being now midnight, and my friend perceiving by his almanack, that the moon was up, he called for his horses, and took a sudden resolution to go to his house, which was at three miles distance from the town, after having bethought himself, that he never slept

<sup>1</sup> [A small vessel for drink.—*Johnson's Dictionary*.]



well out of his own bed. He shook me very heartily by the hand at parting, and discovered a great air of satisfaction in his looks, that he had met with an opportunity of shewing his parts ; and left me a much wiser man than he found me.

### FREEHOLDER, No. 47

*Cessit furor et rabida ora quierunt.*—*VIR. Gen. 6. ver. 102.*

Ceas'd is his fury, and he foams no more.

I QUESTION not but most of my readers will be very well pleased to hear, that my friend the Foxhunter, of whose arrival in town I gave notice in my forty-fourth paper, is become a convert to the present establishment, and a good subject to King George. The motives to his conversion shall be the subject of this paper, as they may be of use to other persons who labour under those prejudices and prepossessions which hung so long upon the mind of my worthy friend. These I had an opportunity of learning the other day, when, at his request, we took a ramble together to see the curiosities of this great town.

The first circumstance, as he ingeniously confessed to me (while we were in the coach together), which helped to disabuse him, was seeing Charles the First on horseback, at Charing-Cross ; for he was sure that Prince could never have kept his seat there, had the stories been true he heard in the country, that forty-one was come about again.

He owned to me that he looked with horror on the new church that is half built in the Strand, as taking it at first sight to be half demolished : But upon inquiring of the workmen, was agreeably surprised to find, that instead of pulling it down, they were building it up ; and that fifty more were raising in other parts of the town.

To these I must add a third circumstance, which I find had no small share in my friend's conversion. Since his coming to town, he chanced to look into the church of St. Paul, about the middle of sermon-time, where, having first examined the dome, to see if it stood safe (for the screw-plot still ran in his head), he observed, that the Lord-Mayor, Aldermen, and city-sword, were a part of the congregation. This sight had the more weight with him,



as by good luck not above two of that venerable body were fallen asleep.

This discourse held us until we came to the tower ; for our first visit was to the lions. My friend, who had a great deal to talk with their keeper, inquired very much after their health, and whether none of them had fallen sick upon the taking of Perth, and the flight of the pretender? And hearing they were never better in their lives, I found he was extremely startled : For he had learned from his cradle, that the lions in the tower were the best judges of the title of our British Kings, and always sympathized with our sovereigns.

After having here satiated our curiosity, we repaired to the monument, where my fellow-traveller, being a well-breathed man, mounted the ascent with much speed and activity. I was forced to halt so often in this perpendicular march, that, upon my joining him on the top of the pillar, I found he had counted all the steeples and towns which were discernible from this advantageous situation, and was endeavouring to compute the number of acres they stood upon. We were both of us very well pleased with this part of the prospect ; but I found he cast an evil eye upon several ware-houses, and other buildings, that looked like barns, and seemed capable of receiving great multitudes of people. His heart misgave him that these were so many meeting-houses ; but upon communicating his suspicions to me, I soon made him easy in this particular.

We then turned our eyes upon the river, which gave me an occasion to inspire him with some favourable thoughts of trade and merchandize, that had filled the Thames with such crowds of ships, and covered the shore with such swarms of people.

We descended very leisurely ; my friend being careful to count the steps, which he registered in a blank leaf of his new almanack. Upon our coming to the bottom, observing an English inscription upon the basis, he read it over several times, and told me, he could scarce believe his own eyes ; for that he had often heard from an old Attorney, who lived near him in the country, that it was the Presbyterians who burned down the city ; whereas, says he, the pillar positively affirms in so many words, that ' the burn-



ing of this ancient city was begun and carried on by the treachery and malice of the popish faction, in order to the carrying on their horrid plot for extirpating the Protestant Religion, and old English liberty, and introducing popery and slavery.' This account, which he looked upon to be more authentic than if it had been in print, I found made very great impression upon him.

We now took coach again, and made the best of our way for the Royal Exchange ; though I found he did not much care to venture himself into the throng of that place ; for he told me he had heard they were, generally speaking, republicans, and was afraid of having his pocket picked amongst them. But he soon conceived a better opinion of them, when he spied the statue of King Charles the Second standing up in the middle of the crowd, and most of the Kings in Baker's *Chronicle* ranged in order over their heads ; from whence he very justly concluded, that an antimonarchical assembly could never choose such a place to meet in once a day.

To continue this good disposition in my friend, after a short stay at Stocks-market, we drove away directly for the Mews, where he was not a little edified with the sight of those fine sets of horses which have been brought over from Hanover, and with the care that is taken of them. He made many good remarks upon this occasion, and was so pleased with his company, that I had much ado to get him out of the stable.

In our progress to St. James's Park (for that was the end of our journey), he took notice, with great satisfaction, that, contrary to his intelligence in the country, the shops were all open and full of business ; that the soldiers walked civilly in the streets ; that clergymen, instead of being affronted, had generally the wall given them ; and that he heard the bells ring to prayers from morning to night, in some part of the town or another.

As he was full of these honest reflections, it happened very luckily for us, that one of the King's coaches passed by with the three young princesses in it, whom by an accidental stop we had an opportunity of surveying for some time. My friend was ravished with the beauty, innocence, and sweetness that appeared in all their faces.



He declared several times that they were the finest children he had ever seen in all his life ; and assured me, that before this sight, if any one had told him it had been possible for three such pretty children to have been born out of England, he should never have believed them.

We were now walking together in the park, and, as is usual for men who are naturally warm and heady to be transported with the greatest flush of good-nature when they are once sweetened, he owned to me very frankly, he had been much imposed upon by those false accounts of things he had heard in the country ; and that he would make it his business, upon his return thither, to set his neighbours right, and give them a more just notion of the present state of affairs.

What confirmed my friend in this excellent temper of mind, and gave him an inexpressible satisfaction, was a message he received, as we were walking together, from the prisoner for whom he had given his testimony in his late trial. This person, having been condemned for his part in the late rebellion, sent him word that his Majesty had been graciously pleased to reprieve him, with several of his friends, in order, as it was thought, to give them their lives ; and that he hoped before he went out of town, they should have a cheerful meeting, and drink health and prosperity to King George.

## SPECTATOR, No. 72

—Genus immortale manet, multosque per annos  
Stat fortuna domus, et avi numerantur avorum.

VIRG., *Georg.*, iv. 208.

Th' immortal line in sure succession reigns,  
The fortune of the family remains,  
And grandsires grandsons the long list contains.

DRYDEN.

HAVING already given my reader an account of several extraordinary clubs both ancient and modern, I did not design to have troubled him with any more narratives of this nature ; but I have lately received information of a club, which I can call neither ancient nor modern, that



I dare say will be no less surprising to my reader, than it was to myself ; for which reason, I shall communicate it to the public as one of the greatest curiosities in its kind.

A friend of mine complaining of a tradesman who is related to him, after having represented him as a very idle worthless fellow, who neglected his family, and spent most of his time over a bottle, told me, to conclude his character, that he was a member of the *Everlasting Club*. So very odd a title raised my curiosity to enquire into the nature of a club that had such a sounding name ; upon which my friend gave me the following account :

The *Everlasting Club* consists of a hundred members, who divide the whole twenty-four hours among them in such a manner, that the club sits day and night from one end of the year to another ; no party presuming to rise till they are relieved by those who are in course to succeed them. By this means a member of the *Everlasting Club* never wants company ; for though he is not upon duty himself, he is sure to find some who are ; so that if he be disposed to take a whet, a nooning, an evening's draught, or a bottle after midnight, he goes to the club, and finds a knot of friends to his mind.

It is a maxim in this club, That the steward never dies ; for as they succeed one another by way of rotation, no man is to quit the great elbow chair which stands at the upper end of the table, till his successor is in a readiness to fill it : insomuch, that there has not been a *sede vacante* in the memory of man.

This club was instituted towards the end, or as some of them say, about the middle, of the civil wars, and continued without interruption till the time of the *great fire*<sup>1</sup>, which burned them out, and dispersed them for several weeks. The steward, at that time, maintained his post till he had like to have been blown up with a neighbouring-house, which was demolished in order to stop the fire ; and would not leave the chair at last, till he had emptied all the bottles upon the table, and received repeated directions from the club to withdraw himself. This steward is frequently talked of in the club, and looked upon by every

<sup>1</sup> [*Anno 1666.*]



member of it as a greater man than the famous captain mentioned in my Lord Clarendon, who was burned in his ship because he would not quit it without orders. It is said, that towards the close of 1700, being the great year of jubilee, the club had it under consideration whether they should break up or continue their session ; but, after many speeches and debates, it was at length agreed to sit out the other century. This resolution passed in a general club, *nemine contradicente*.

Having given this short account of the institution and continuation of the *Everlasting Club*, I should here endeavour to say something of the manners and character of its several members, which I shall do according to the best lights I have received in this matter.

It appears by their books in general, that, since their first institution, they have smoked fifty tons of tobacco, drank thirty thousand butts of ale, one thousand hogsheads of red port, two hundred barrels of brandy, and a kilderkin of small beer. There has been likewise a great consumption of cards. It is also said, that they observe the law in Ben Jonson's Club, which orders the fire to be always kept in, *focus perennis esto*, as well for the convenience of lighting their pipes, as to cure the dampness of the club-room. They have an old woman in the nature of a vestal, whose business it is to cherish and perpetuate the fire, which burns from generation to generation, and has seen the glass-house fires in and out above an hundred times.

The *Everlasting Club* treats all other clubs with an eye of contempt, and talks even of the Kit Cat and October as of a couple of upstarts. Their ordinary discourse, as much as I have been able to learn of it, turns altogether upon such adventures as have passed in their own assembly ; of members who have taken the glass in their turns for a week together, without stirring out of the club ; of others who have smoked an hundred pipes at a sitting ; of others who have not missed their morning's-draught for twenty years together. Sometimes they speak in raptures of a run of ale in King Charles's reign ; and sometimes reflect with astonishment upon games at whist, which have been miraculously recovered by members of the society, when in all human probability the case was desperate.



They delight in several old catches, which they sing at all hours to encourage one another to moisten their clay, and grow immortal by drinking ; with many other edifying exhortations of the like nature.

There are four general clubs held in a year, at which times they fill up vacancies, appoint waiters, confirm the old fire-maker, or elect a new one, settle contributions for coals, pipes, tobacco, and other necessaries.

The senior member has out-lived the whole club twice over, and has been drunk with the grandfathers of some of the present sitting members.



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